E/1991/25
E/CN.3/1991/32

STATISTICAL COMMISSION

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

(4–13 February 1991)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1991

SUPPLEMENT No. 5

UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

E/1991/25
E/CN.3/1991/32

ISSN 0251-9976

Summary

At its twenty-sixth session, the Commission, having noted the progress made to date in the revision of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA), made recommendations to improve the mechanisms for meeting the revised target date of 1993 for completion of the work and insisted that the target date be strictly adhered to. It emphasized that drafting the final text of the revised SNA should have the highest priority. High priority was also assigned to the drafting of a handbook on the use of SNA in economies in transition and another on national accounting in constant prices and inflation accounting, reflecting the needs of developing countries with inflation problems. The Commission was pleased to learn of the strong interest on the part of countries currently or formerly using the System of Balances of the National Economy to introduce SNA in varying degrees of detail. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the various organizations and countries that had given support to the SNA revision process and requested that efforts be made to mobilize additional resources to complete the revision and support implementation of the revised SNA.

The Commission stressed the increasing importance of environment statistics, which were needed to support policies and programmes at the national, regional and global levels. There was broad support for an expanded programme in environment statistics, concentrating on priorities specified by the Commission, although implementation would require additional staff resources.

In the field of statistics on services, the Commission welcomed the continued contribution of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, a volunteer coooperative grouping of specialists from interested Governments and participating international organizations. Recognizing the significant and growing contribution that services make to national and international development, the Commission supported the activities in service statistics proposed by the Statistical Office. While endorsing the function of the Statistical Office as the continuing secretariat of the Voorburg Group, it emphasized the necessity of using traditional processes for developing international recommendations, which draw on experience and developments in all regions of the world.

With one or two reservations, the Commission expressed strong support for the International Comparison Programme (ICP), designed to produce internationally comparable purchasing power parities at the global level. Many members considered that the purchasing power parities resulting from ICP would be a qualitatively superior substitute for the present use of exchange rates in international comparisons. The Commission encouraged wider publicity of the results of ICP and their use at the national and international levels.

The Commission endorsed the continuation of the World Programme of Industrial Statistics to cover as many countries as possible. It also expressed satisfaction with the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme.

The Commission endorsed the work on development indicators and the qualitative aspects of development undertaken by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in close coooperation with the Statistical

Office and other international organizations in response to numerous General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions. It expressed its appreciation to the Government of Morocco, which will act as host for an international meeting of experts on social development indicators in April 1991. The Commission commended the Statistical Office, the United Nations Children''s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization for the progress achieved in technical and organizational planning for a programme for social monitoring in the 1990s, linked to major mandates and objectives adopted by Governments in the social fields. It also endorsed the work programme and activities of the Statistical Office on women and special population groups and recommended the maximum possible support for countries interested in developing statistics in those fields. In endorsing the phased implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, the Commission expressed its appreciation to the organizations that had developed the Programme and to UNFPA and UNICEF for providing initial financial support.

The Commission endorsed the technical cooperation activities in statistics carried out by the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development with the substantive technical support of the Statistical Office. It strongly recommended that implementation of decisions on new agency support cost arrangements arising from General Assembly resolution 44/211 and decision 90/26 of the Governing Council of UNDP not negatively affect the implementation of the technical cooperation programme in statistics. The Commission commended the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) as a dynamic and effective programme of technical cooperation and strongly recommended that it be extended beyond 1991. It also considered initiatives taken by the World Bank in promoting permanent integrated household surveys. It expressed its appreciation of the contribution of the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and noted the focus of the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project on developing national information systems that fed relevant information directly into the policy-making process. It noted with deep concern that, in the field of household surveys, a number of problems in coordination among various technical cooperation initiatives remained.

The Commission also discussed two special topics: with regard to the first topic, increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services, the Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and expressed the view that it would be a useful took for national and international statistical offices in deciding on actions that might be effective; with regard to the second topic, the effect of the debt crisis and structural adjustment on statistical activities at the national and international levels, the Commission requested that the report of the Secretary-General and related materials be circulated to all national statistical offices in developing countries for comments and that the comments received be referred to the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination for possible further action.

With regard to the proposed programme of work in statistics for the biennium 1992-1993, the Commission expressed concern about the review process, the instructions given and the format and terminology used and requested that a more simple format be used in the future. In spite of these concerns, the

Commission agreed that the proposed programme of work, as orally modified, was in line with the Commission's discussions, reflected broadly the priorities and objectives set by the Commission and constituted an appropriate basis for organizing the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for the biennium 1992-1993.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Paragraphs	Page
I.	MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION	1 - 3	1
	A. Draft decision	1	1
	B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council .	2 - 3	3
II.	SPECIAL ISSUES	4 - 27	4
	A. Increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services	4 - 17	4
	B. Effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services .	18 - 27	7
III.	NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES	28 - 50	11
	A. System of National Accounts (SNA)	28 - 38	11
	B. System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)	39 - 42	15
	C. Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy ..	43 - 50	16
IV.	INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS	51 - 60	18
V.	SERVICE STATISTICS	61 - 70	20
VI.	PRICE STATISTICS	71 - 87	23
VII.	INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS	88 - 100	27
VIII.	DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS	101 - 159	31
	A. Population and housing censuses	101 - 110	31
	B. Civil registration and vital statistics	111 - 121	33
	C. Social statistics and indicators	122 - 135	35
	D. Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development	136 - 141	39
	E. Environment statistics	142 - 154	40
	F. Human settlements statistics	155 - 159	44

CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter		Paragraphs	Page
IX.	DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF METHODOLOGICAL WORK ..	160 - 170	46
X.	TECHNICAL COOPERATION	171 - 214	49
	A. Technical cooperation in statistics	171 - 182	49
	B. National Household Survey Capability Programme ..	183 - 195	52
	C. World Bank household survey initiatives	196 - 205	54
	D. Coordination issues related to the National Household Survey Capability Programme, the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project and the Living Standards Measurement Study	206 - 214	56
XI.	COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES	215 - 222	59
XII.	PROGRAMME QUESTIONS	223 - 240	62
	A. Programme performance and implementation	223 - 226	62
	B. Programme objectives and planning	227 - 240	63
XIII.	PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION	241 - 249	67
XIV.	ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION	250	70
XV.	ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION	251 - 256	71
	A. Opening and duration of the session	251 - 252	71
	B. Attendance	253	71
	C. Election of officers	254	71
	D. Agenda and organization of work	255 - 256	71

Annexes

I.	ATTENDANCE	72
II.	AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION	75
III.	LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION	77

CHAPTER I

MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Draft decision

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-sixth session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-seventh session of the Commission set out below, together with the documentation listed.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special topics (to be determined).

4. National accounts and balances.

Documentation

Report on the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA)

Report on the implementation of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA)

Final draft of the revised System of National Accounts (SNA)

Report of the International Labour Office on the informal sector

5. International classifications.

Documentation

Report containing a review of national and international work and needs in the field of implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), Rev.3, and the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC)

Report of the International Labour Office on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE)

6. Industrial statistics.

Documentation

Report on the World Programme of Industrial Statistics

7. Service statistics.

Documentation

Report on the work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics

8. Price statistics.

Documentation

Report on developments in the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and other related international comparison issues

9. Demographic and social statistics.

Documentation

Report on demographic and social statistics, including statistics on the advancement of women

10. Environment statistics.

Documentation

Report on progress made in environment statistics

11. Tourism statistics.

Documentation

Report of the World Tourism Organization on the International Conference on Travel and Tourism Statistics

12. General development and integration of methodological work.

Documentation

Report on general development and integration of methodological work

13. Technical cooperation.

Documentation

Report on technical cooperation in statistics

Report on the promotion of national household survey capabilities

Report on the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) (World Bank)

Report on the programme to monitor achievement of social goals in the 1990s and related methodological work

14. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its fourteenth session

Report on the statistical work of international organizations

Report on the plans of international organizations in the field of statistics

15. Programme questions:

(a) Programme performance and implementation;

Documentation

Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, including information on programme performance during the biennium 1990-1991

(b) Programme objectives and planning.

Documentation

Draft programme of work of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1994-1995 and proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1994-1997

16. Provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

17. Report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

2. The attention of the Council is drawn to the recommendation of the Commission that the fourteenth session of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination be held at Geneva from 17 to 20 September 1991 (see para. 222 below).

3. The attention of the Council is also drawn to the decisions and other recommendations of the Commission (see paras. 17, 27, 38, 42, 50, 60, 70, 87, 100, 110, 121, 135, 141, 154, 159, 170, 182, 195, 205, 214, 219-221, 226, 240 and 248 below).

CHAPTER II

SPECIAL ISSUES

A. Increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services

4. The Commission considered item 3 (a) of its agenda at its 436th and 437th meetings, on 4 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services (E/CN.3/1991/3) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. I).

5. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services and expressed appreciation to the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for its preparation and to the national statistical offices and international organizations that had completed the questionnaire used as a basis for the report. The Commission considered that the experiences described in the report would be of value to both national statistical offices and international organizations. However, the Commission stressed that national statistical offices and international organizations would need to diagnose their own situations and assess the appropriateness of the various approaches in the light of each country's specific problems, needs and overall circumstances.

6. The discussion focused on ways of improving user awareness in statistical outputs. Several members noted that the first condition for promoting awareness was that the statistical outputs should be of adequate quality and meet user needs. The priorities frequently expressed by users included timeliness, quality, comparability, clarity of presentation and provision of analysis and interpretation. Some users also frequently wanted policy implications to be highlighted. In addition, data at the provincial or local authority level were needed by some users. Other methods of meeting user needs included the presentation of data in a regional context and the inclusion of international data in national publications. The satisfaction of many user needs required the use of current technologies available to and preferred by users, including the provision of user-friendly software. In addition, in some cases, user needs were better met by providing aggregate series in standard outputs and leaving the more detailed data to be disseminated in other ways, on request. It was recognized that needs changed with changing economic, social and political situations, as described by several representatives, including representatives of countries in transition.

7. The Commission noted the action taken by national statistical offices and international organizations to promote awareness of their statistical outputs. Much of the action taken was similar in many of the countries. The need to use multiple channels was emphasized by many members and it was noted that different approaches were needed in relation to the different outputs of national statistical offices. The action taken fell into four broad groups: use of the media, consultations with users, dialogue with providers of data and promotional activities.

8. Many participants described the use of the media for disseminating statistical data. It was done through press releases, press conferences, interviews between media representatives and senior staff of the national statistical office and generally maintaining an effective and open dialogue with the media. It was, in many developed and developing countries, a major means by which statistical information was communicated to many people and organizations. The use of local languages in the media particularly helped to increase awareness among the general population. However, in some situations other means of dissemination, such as user committees, workshops and seminars, could be considered more appropriate for the dissemination of statistics.

9. Many participants considered consultation with users a key factor. Several national statistical offices identified the various groups of users they served. Those offices formulated policies and programmes tailored to meet the needs of specific user groups. Some national statistical offices found that bilateral dialogues at senior levels were an effective means of determining user needs and of promoting existing statistical products. The establishment of various user-producer advisory committees or user panels for different statistics was also found to be an efficient way to determine priorities and seek advice and also to educate users on how best they could gain access to, understand and use statistical information.

10. The value of maintaining a dialogue with the providers of statistical information was also stressed. Frequently, providers were also users. It was considered beneficial to explain to the providers the importance of statistical censuses and surveys since that fostered a positive attitude towards the studies and elicited improved responses. In general, it was considered that the effort devoted to educating providers on the nature and use of statistics enhanced confidence levels and knowledge of statistics and generally promoted positive responses to statistical data collection. One member said that in order to maintain good relations with specific suppliers of information, the national statistical office provided brief results of the previous survey each time new questionnaires were distributed.

11. Many members cited various channels through which they promoted their statistical outputs. Those channels included general public relations activities, advertising, cross-advertising in publications, direct mailings to known users, personal letters, contact with the artist community, national competitions (mainly among schoolchildren), the establishment of a National Statistics Day at the national or regional level and the use of public displays of statistical information, using current technologies such as computer graphics, about attendance at major meetings, industry fairs and other events. Promotional activity was found to be most effective when it was targeted at specific user groups. Some national statistical offices also tried to promote the national statistical office as a vital institution on a continuous basis through a variety of approaches. Dissemination of data banks was found to be a useful way of increasing awareness of statistics availability in developing countries; but that aspect had not been widely developed in developing countries and technical cooperation was required, particularly in relation to the relevant technology.

12. The practice of charging a fee for statistical outputs varied among national statistical offices. In general, the national statistical offices were seen as providing a public good and the products were aimed at

facilitating government policy and monitoring and fostering community understanding of issues. That activity was usually funded centrally and the outputs were either provided free of charge or at nominal cost. In the process of completing those outputs, and in some cases as a result of special surveys and studies, national statistical offices could also produce customized outputs and technologically advanced products, which were made available at a fee. That was a common practice in an increasing number of national statistical offices. The basis of charging varied, including full economic cost on a profit-making basis, dissemination costs only (printing and distribution) and on a cost-recovery basis for new outputs or special surveys. The point was made that charging for outputs was an effective means of clarifying the priority needs of users and of encouraging statistical office staff to adopt an approach more oriented towards meeting user needs. Other practices involving financial support included having users, including some government departments, contribute to or cover in full the cost of special surveys. It was noted that in some countries, particularly developing countries, revenues went into general government revenue and were not available to the national statistical office. In addition, the obligation to provide complimentary copies of outputs strained resources.

13. It was generally agreed that the two objectives of providing a public good and special products to meet specific user needs should be harmonized. They could be pursued simultaneously and without conflict, although it was emphasized that caution should be exercised to avoid distorting programme priorities because of the availability of funds from specific interest groups for certain outputs.

14. Several national statistical offices had made special organizational arrangements to promote awareness among users, increase dissemination and better meet user needs. Sometimes that included the creation of a special unit for dissemination or marketing and market development. The point was made that in a situation of severe budget constraints a decentralized statistical system could be resource-effective where the national statistical office concentrated on general statistical needs, while the various sectoral ministries were responsible for statistics in specific areas. The status of the national statistical organizations in the overall government framework could also affect funding. In some cases, the national statistical offices needed to promote awareness in all government circles of the contribution that statistics could make to policy formulation. In many cases, that could affect budget allocations even for routine statistical activities and needed government support to obtain resources from donors for specific areas of statistics. In that connection, the point was made that it was necessary in the developing countries to reconcile the interests of aid agencies and the data needed by countries for their own needs.

15. While recognizing that the report of the Secretary-General could be a good basis for sharing information and experiences among countries, several members requested that a more detailed report be prepared, including expansion of the survey to cover more countries. That could be done by sending the existing study to additional national statistical offices for comments, including their experiences in user awareness. The new report should be made available to all national statistical offices and international organizations.

16. It was also suggested that planning commissions and other major users could be surveyed for their needs and their views on statistical outputs. Finally, the point was made that international organizations could learn from the experiences of national statistical offices and that there was scope for greater collaboration between national statistical offices and international organizations on dissemination and ways in which statistical outputs could be made more responsive to user needs.

Action taken by the Commission

17. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services (E/CN.3/1991/3) and expressed the view that it would be a helpful tool for national statistical offices and international organizations in deciding on action that might be effective, but stressed that possible action needed to be assessed in the light of the specific problems, needs and circumstances of each national statistical office and international organization;

(b) Noted that national statistical offices had taken steps to improve user awareness and meet user needs;

(c) Also noted that national statistical offices and international organizations needed to keep abreast of changes in needs and respond to them;

(d) Expressed the view that while considerable success had been achieved in meeting user needs, in particular through the use of new technology, the stage reached varied from country to country and the achievements to date could be further enhanced;

(e) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to extend the study as outlined in paragraph 15 above and to circulate the results to national statistical offices and international organizations.

B. Effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services

18. The Commission considered item 3 (b) of its agenda at its 446th and 447th meetings, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services (E/CN.3/1991/4) and the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the development of a coordinated United Nations system database for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest and the development of related national databases (E/CN.3/1991/20).

19. The Commission heard statements made by the representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

20. The representative of the World Bank said that the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.3/1991/4) was too general and that it over-simplified the complexities of the structural adjustment process. In particular, he emphasized that the characterization of the adjustment process as a balance of payments issue was incorrect. He stressed that adjustment was geared to the re-establishment of conditions for sustained growth. The effects of structural adjustment on statistical offices were a matter not only of facing cutbacks in existing programmes, but also of meeting new programme challenges. Among such challenges was the need for different kinds of data to serve as an information base for policy makers - for example, indicators that addressed the social aspects of the adjustment process and external debt data. He further pointed out that the report did not address the issue of how national and international statistical agencies had responded to the challenge of adapting to those new circumstances. With regard to the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, he said that while his organization agreed that there was a need to look at the statistical implications of the Strategy, the Strategy did not offer concrete guidance on statistical priorities for a reorientation of work at the national level. He emphasized the importance of identifying statistical priorities at the national level. In his view, international goals were not an adequate substitute for national actions. He requested the Commission to conduct a further study aimed at developing appropriate strategies for statistical programmes that were responsive to user needs.

21. The representative of IMF expressed satisfaction that the report appeared to have taken a number of the Fund's comments into account and was more balanced than an earlier version had been. However, the report still did not address the improvements in the areas of statistics that were of direct concern in the adjustment process, namely balance-of-payments, monetary and fiscal statistics. He acknowledged, however, that most often those statistics were compiled by central banks and ministries of finance rather than national statistical offices. He said that IMF had increased technical assistance and had expanded training programmes in the area of statistics. He reminded the Commission that, since the objective of a structural adjustment programme was to increase resources by the end of the programme, the assumption was that there would be increased resources for statistical offices to use.

22. The Commission noted that the general information on structural adjustment and the debt burden contained in section I of the report had been included as background information. The discussion should therefore focus on the statistical issues raised in sections II and III. It was recognized that different organizations might have different interpretations of the phenomena of structural adjustment and the debt burden. The Commission was of the opinion that the report, supplemented by the statements of the representatives of the World Bank and IMF, would serve as a useful basis for the discussion.

23. The Commission's discussion of the impact of structural adjustment and the debt burden on national statistical offices and the statistical implications of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade was not conclusive. The Commission noted that only a small number of developing countries had responded to the inquiry concerning the impact of structural adjustment and the debt burden on their work. Since the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission, however, an assessment of the statistical capacity of 32 countries had been carried out by the

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Major factors affecting the performance of African national statistical services in the 1980s had been analysed, including the impact of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden. Based on that analysis, the African Conference of Ministers responsible for development and planning had adopted, in 1990, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade had been adopted only in December 1990, so that an analysis of it could not have been included in the report.

24. One member noted that due to the adoption of policies recommended by the World Bank and IMF, public expenditures in many countries had been reduced, with serious deleterious effects on statistical services. A series of events that had taken place under structural adjustment was described, including a salary freeze, subsequent loss of statistical office staff and the impossibility of recruiting statisticians, owing to preference being given to offices involved in customs and taxation; the end result was that the statistical office concerned had suffered a 30 per cent reduction in staff.

25. The Commission noted that one element of the adjustment process was austerity measures, which resulted in budget cuts. Such cuts affected statistical services as well as other public sector services. It was reported, however, that in some cases the impact of structural adjustment on statistical offices might not be typical of other parts of national civil services because of the availability of project funds. One member supported the thrust of the report, but pointed out that statistical offices did not always grasp or react quickly enough to requests for current data. Another view expressed was that national statistical offices were not always well-placed within the government structure to be informed of the need for statistical support to determine the effects of structural analysis. It was noted that in francophone Africa, in particular, while policies on structural adjustment had been initiated in finance and economic ministries, statistical offices had remained in planning ministries. That had made communication between statisticians and policy makers difficult.

26. In view of the strong interest in the subject, the anticipated duration of the impact of structural adjustment and the importance of the International Development Strategy for development policies and programmes, the Commission recommended that the Statistical Office circulate the report, the comments of the World Bank and IMF and the section of the Commission's report dealing with the subject to all developing countries for comment. The comments received and related materials could then be brought to the attention of the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination for its views on further action on the subject.

Action taken by the Commission

27. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Office to circulate the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services (E/CN.3/1991/4), the statements of the World Bank and IMF and the

relevant section of the report of the Commission to all national statistical offices in developing countries for comment;

(b) Requested the Statistical Office to transmit the comments received and related materials to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination for its views on further action.

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

A. System of National Accounts (SNA)

28. The Commission considered item 4 (a) of its agenda at its 440th and 441st meetings, on 6 February 1991. It had before it the progress report of the Secretary-General on the revision of the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1991/5), the report of the Working Party of the Conference of European Statisticians on the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1991/6), the report of the Economic Commission for Africa Meeting on the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1991/7), the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Meetings on the System of National Accounts (E/CN.3/1991/8), the final report of the Regional Seminar on National Accounts convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (E/CN.3/1991/9), the report of the expert meeting on the revision of the System of National Accounts in the Arab world (E/CN.3/1991/10), the report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Reconciliation of SNA/MPS Standards of National Accounting (E/CN.3/1991/11), the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the development of environment statistics and future plans (E/CN.3/1991/23), the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. II) and draft chapters and annexes of the revised System of National Accounts (PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4).

29. The Commission expressed its thanks for the coordinating efforts and resources provided by the international organizations participating in the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, IMF, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)) and the assistance provided by national statistical offices in the form of voluntary contributions made by their staff as experts of SNA coordinating and other expert groups. It also expressed particular thanks to Messrs. P. Hill and A. Vanoli, the principal consultants, who had prepared draft chapters of the revised SNA on the basis of recommendations made by expert groups, and to Ms. Carol Carson for the management support provided to the Intersecretariat Working Group. The Commission noted that some of the annexes and material used in preparation of the revised text had been prepared by international organizations as well as other consultants.

30. Nevertheless, many members of the Commission expressed concern that the target date for completion of the revised SNA had had to be deferred from 1991 to 1993. The Commission emphasized that any further delay would adversely affect the credibility of the SNA review process. Therefore, it stressed the necessity of strict adherence to the timetable corresponding to the 1993 target date.

31. In responding to those concerns, the representative of the Secretariat pointed out that recognition in early 1989 by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group that the target date of 1991 could not be met was partly due to the fact that particular new developments required that essential elements of the

System be further reviewed. He also pointed out that the application of the System to countries in transition required further refinement of certain concepts, and the development of environmental accounting as satellite accounts also necessitated further review of the balance sheets and capital stock principles of the System. Representatives of the major international organizations participating in the Intersecretariat Working Group reaffirmed their commitment to completion of the revision process by the 1993 deadline.

32. Various actions were recommended to avoid any further delay in completing the SNA review process and to have the final draft of the revised System available for the twenty-seventh session of the Commission. That would have to be done within a very tight timetable. Priorities would have to be clearly defined. Some members suggested that the revision process should be more focused on the revision of SNA, leaving out for the time being work on any parallel activities, such as handbooks, that were not strictly related to completion of the work. Other members said that full attention should be directed towards the completion of a draft and that that work should not be interrupted for further study of issues that had not been resolved. The Commission agreed that the SNA revision should be given the highest priority in the programme of work of the Statistical Office and that, accordingly, all the resources needed to complete the programme in 1993 would have to be mobilized. The Commission was of the opinion that if the various views on outstanding issues were very far apart, it would be premature to arrive at the current time at an agreed-upon definition and treatment. More generally, the Commission reaffirmed the decision it had taken at its twenty-fifth session - namely, that if no consensus could be reached among participating experts, the Coordinating Expert Group should retain the definitions and treatments of the 1968 SNA. If no guidance was found in the 1968 SNA, a recommendation with a flexible interpretation might be accepted, leaving the actual application to countries concerned or to a further elaboration in handbooks. In the year ahead, attention should be devoted to the greatest extent possible to the work of drafting, with a minimum of distraction and meetings. Several members of the Commission suggested that in order to conclude the remaining part of the SNA review process promptly, a mandate should be given to a referee. There was widespread agreement that Ms. Carol Carson would be a suitable person to perform such a function. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Commission would mandate the Intersecretariat Working Group to take decisions on issues on which expert groups could not reach a consensus and that the Working Group would delegate that function to Ms. Carson. The Commission agreed that, for the new timetable to be met, it would be necessary to leave some questions unresolved. The distinction between market and non-market production was cited as an example. Exactly where the line between them should be drawn was a dilemma of very long standing. In order to avoid further delay in the revision of SNA it would be necessary to make a rapid decision on such questions rather than persist in the search for ideal solutions.

33. There was general appreciation for the work that had been accomplished thus far, as reflected in the draft chapters before the Commission and it was recognized that the regional commissions had played a constructive role in the process. A number of members of the Commission commented on specific aspects of the draft revised SNA. There was general support for the integrated feature of the new System, bringing together analysis of production with analysis of income distribution and financial analysis. One member noted that

the emphasis on institutional sectors should not imply that the establishment become a secondary unit of analysis. Some members welcomed the decision to include mineral exploration expenses in capital formation; others regretted that research and development expenditures were not included in capital formation. There were also critical comments on the elimination of non-profit institutions serving households as a separate sector and the inclusion of a separate production account for households. One member commented favourably on the concept of entrepreneurial income introduced into the System. Another member said that natural growth should not be treated as output, as was recommended in the revised System. It was suggested that imputed bank service charges should be treated in the same way as in the 1968 SNA and should not be distributed to users, as was recommended in the revised System.

34. Some members said that more emphasis should be placed on the needs and realities of developing countries. More attention should be given, in particular to the separate identification of informal activities, which were very important in developing countries. One member said that the main aggregates of the System did not reflect well-being in those countries and could not be easily used for monitoring medium- and long-term development strategies.

35. Many members from developing regions emphasized the need for handbooks, which would be practical and would help those working on compiling national accounts in those regions to implement the System. It was noted that existing handbooks, such as the one on production accounts, would have to be revised after adoption of the revised SNA in 1993. In particular, the need for handbooks on national accounting in constant prices and inflation accounting and on the application of SNA in transition economies was mentioned. Those handbooks were given highest priority by the Commission. The Commission welcomed the development of a handbook on environmental accounting, which was being produced with extrabudgetary support. Some members wished to include that handbook on the list of handbooks with the highest priority. The representative of IMF reported on the work that the Fund was undertaking towards finalizing balance-of-payments and money and banking manuals, which would harmonize with the SNA treatment of those topics. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) offered help for the implementation of SNA in the areas of agriculture, fishery and forestry. He said that a handbook on agriculture was in preparation and would be submitted to SNA experts for comments. Supplementing the handbooks for implementation of SNA, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat was requested to develop further software packages that could be used to facilitate the implementation of SNA with the help of microcomputers.

36. Several participants emphasized the need to revise SNA periodically, in periods shorter than the 25 years that had elapsed since the previous revision.

37. The Commission stressed that implementation of the System would be one of the priority activities before the 1993 target date and the sole objective immediately after it. The need for holding workshops, developing microcomputer software and training national accountants was emphasized. Furthermore, it would be necessary to deal with the question of continuity of time-series after the implementation of SNA and the development of a unified methodology for imputations of non-monetary transactions. In order to develop a systematic strategy for such implementation, several participants urged that

the Intersecretariat Working Group prepare a document with proposals for the next session of the Commission.

Action taken by the Commission

38. The Commission:

(a) Noted the progress made with the SNA review since the twenty-fifth session of the Commission. It recognized, however, that the review had not been completed in accordance with the Commission's 1991 target;

(b) Unanimously insisted that the revised target date of 1993 for completion of the work be strictly adhered to and made recommendations to improve the mechanisms through which the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts would implement that objective;

(c) Extended its thanks to all those who had thus far contributed to the review of SNA;

(d) Decided that the Statistical Commission should mandate the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts to take decisions on issues on which expert groups could not reach a consensus and that the Intersecretariat Working Group should delegate that function to Ms. Carol Carson. The Chairman of the Commission might be called upon to help deal with problems in carrying out that mandate;

(e) Recommended that meetings be limited to those absolutely necessary and that final agreements be reached between the members of the Coordinating Expert Group by means of electronic and other methods of networking;

(f) Emphasized that drafting the text of the revised SNA should have the highest priority and should not be delayed for further study of conceptual issues;

(g) Gave high priority to the development of the revised SNA and a minimum of two handbooks, one on SNA for transition economies and the other on national accounting in constant prices and inflation accounting; the handbooks should be practical and understandable;

(h) Recommended that a multilingual glossary of national accounts terms be developed to facilitate use of the System in different languages and environments and that such a glossary should be based on past efforts by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (Russian) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (Spanish);

(i) Expressed its appreciation to the various organizations and countries that had given additional support to the SNA review process, either in cash or in kind and requested the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to try to mobilize additional resources to complete the revision and support optimal implementation of SNA;

(j) Requested that the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts prepare for the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session a report on a strategy to implement SNA after the adoption of the System in 1993, dealing not only with national accounts but also with regional accounts, and covering all instruments available for such implementation, including handbooks, software for SNA compilation, workshops, training and technical cooperation programmes;

(k) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to prepare a full statement of the resources, cash and in kind, used in the revision process of SNA;

(l) Requested the Secretariat to give priority to translation and reproduction of the revised draft SNA so that it would be available for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session.

B. System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)

39. The Commission considered item 4 (b) of its agenda at its 441st meeting, on 6 February 1991. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1991/12) transmitting the report of the secretariat of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on the activities of the CMEA Standing Commission for Cooperation in the Field of Statistics with respect to the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) and related issues.

40. The Commission was informed that some countries found it useful to continue utilization of MPS in their statistical systems. Practically all the countries that currently used or had formerly used MPS intended to continue their efforts to apply SNA either as a whole or in part.

41. The Commission was pleased to note that the second draft of the methodology for calculating gross domestic product (GDP) in CMEA member countries had been discussed at a CMEA expert group meeting held in Moscow in January 1991. Representatives of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and OECD and several SNA experts had participated in the discussion and had presented SNA topics. Participants in the meeting had agreed to finalize the second draft document after revision of SNA.

Action taken by the Commission

42. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report prepared by the CMEA secretariat on progress achieved in the development of the methodology of GDP calculations applicable to CMEA member countries (E/CN.3/1991/12, annex);

(b) Requested that any further elaboration of MPS methodology made in order to bring MPS and SNA closer together be reported to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session and that further work on the methodology of GDP calculations applicable to countries still using MPS be presented as part of the reports on SNA.

C. Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy

43. The Commission considered item 4 (c) of its agenda at its 441st meeting, on 6 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Reconciliation of SNA/MPS Standards of National Accounting and related activities (E/CN.3/1991/11) and the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the harmonization of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS) (E/CN.3/1991/13).

44. The Commission noted several recent developments referred to in its discussion of item 4 (a), which were of importance for its discussion on the use of SNA in countries in transition.

45. The Commission was pleased to learn of the strong interest on the part of members from countries currently or formerly using MPS to introduce SNA in varying degrees of detail. Some members from those countries said that the integration of SNA and MPS should not be emphasized; rather, the implementation of SNA in transition economies should be the focus of attention. Others said that efforts should be made to intensify the process of complete introduction of SNA in their statistical practice. In that way there would be a short transitional period when both SNA and MPS would be used together. The view was also expressed that, in general, the transitional period would be a longer one.

46. Some members noted that combination features from both systems could better reflect economic development. While MPS could trace separately the flows of material goods and non-material services, which was important information for policy formulation in some countries, SNA could show how information on production was related to measures of income and financial concepts. One member expressed the view that a hybrid system combining major aggregates of the two systems within a new integrated framework might be more effective for economic analysis and policy-making in some situations.

47. The Commission agreed that coordinated technical cooperation and workshops would be needed to familiarize national accountants in countries in transition with SNA and to facilitate its implementation. Special attention should be given to the development of SNA production accounts, income-generation and distribution accounts and capital accounts, on the basis of statistics currently now being compiled for MPS. The Commission noted that all of those topics would be covered in the planned handbook on the application of SNA in transition economies.

48. Members from countries currently or formerly using MPS expressed their appreciation to international organizations and individual countries for providing financial and methodological support to their efforts to introduce international statistical standards in their countries.

49. The Commission welcomed the proposed reorientation of work by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in the areas of national accounting and other aspects of statistical methodology concerning countries currently or formerly using MPS. It agreed that any future work be carried out in the context of ongoing methodological work in each substantive field. In other words, the special needs of those countries in national accounts

would be part of the ongoing work of SNA; similarly, needs in the area of classifications would be dealt with as a part of the work on classifications and so on.

Action taken by the Commission

50. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed recent developments in the field of harmonization of SNA and MPS and emphasized the need for coordinated efforts to introduce SNA in varying degrees of detail in many countries currently or formerly using MPS;

(b) Endorsed the planned work on the handbook on the application of SNA in transition economies, which would be carried out in close cooperation between the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations participating in the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts;

(c) Emphasized that the conceptual and analytical concerns of countries in transition should be taken into account in the revision of SNA;

(d) Endorsed the view that future work by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in the areas of national accounting and other aspects of statistical methodology concerning countries currently or formerly using MPS should be carried out in the context of ongoing methodological work in each substantive field;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, details on the progress made in the application of SNA to countries in transition, as part of the reports on SNA.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

51. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 439th meeting, on 5 February 1991. It had before it the report of the International Labour Office on the progress of work on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) (E/CN.3/1991/14).

52. The Commission was informed that the report contained information on the work done since the twenty-fifth session of the Commission. It was further informed that the schedule of work included a meeting of experts, to be convened by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at Geneva early in 1992 to advise the ILO Bureau of Statistics on a draft revision of the classification for consideration by both the Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians to be held at Geneva in January 1993 and the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session, in 1993.

53. The Commission welcomed the ILO initiative to review ICSE which, it was noted, had remained virtually unchanged since it was first elaborated some years before. Many members and organizations expressed interest in the idea of expanding ICSE to reflect already existing practices in countries in order to enhance its usefulness.

54. Some members, however, expressed concern about the applicability to censuses and labour force surveys of the proposed definitions based on the criteria of "economic risks" and control. It was mentioned that field inquiries in many countries used self-assessment by respondents for reporting their status in employment and as a result the proposed criteria might raise difficulty. A point was also made on the ideological connotation of the term "economic risks" in certain countries where the phrase had often been used in a specific sense describing aspects of employer-employee relationships.

55. Several members pointed out that the revised ICSE should adequately take into account the situation of transition economies of the Eastern and Central European countries, particularly with regard to the new forms of enterprise ownership, joint-stock companies and cooperatives. The need for applicability in countries with centrally planned economies, where the employer-employee relationship did not exist in the traditional sense, was also stressed.

56. Questions were raised about the applicability of some of the existing categories of ICSE to developing countries; in particular, the categories of unpaid family workers and own-account workers. It was reported that the requirements of family relationship and household membership implied in the present definition of an unpaid family worker were unduly restrictive. With regard to own-account workers, it was mentioned that many respondents in surveys who were operating an enterprise did not consider the engagement of a relative, even if paid, as an employee and, consequently, they might classify themselves as own-account workers rather than employers.

57. The Commission stressed the need for a clear framework enabling the statistical treatment of particular borderline categories, including multiple jobholders, seasonal workers, temporary and permanent workers, homeworkers,

marginal workers, casual workers, managers and directors who did not own the enterprises in which they worked, members of the armed forces and members of religious institutions.

58. Finally, several members pointed out their recent country experiences in examining their national classifications of status in employment and their willingness to contribute to the work of the proposed ILO meeting of experts.

59. The Commission noted the close cooperation that existed between the International Labour Office and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in the context of population and housing census recommendations. The Commission reaffirmed its central interest in the work on ICSE. It noted that the existing classification of status in employment at the one-digit level had formed a part of the United Nations Population and Housing Census Recommendations over the past several decades, as adopted by the Commission. Accordingly, the Commission was of the opinion that the proposed revised classification should be submitted to the Commission for adoption as well as to the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. In addition, the Commission reiterated that ICSE should remain distinct; it should not overlap with the revised International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) or the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).

Action taken by the Commission

60. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the time schedule and future work on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE) by the International Labour Office in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other interested organizations;

(b) Strongly supported the ILO proposal to convene an expert group meeting on ICSE and recommended that the Group consider extensively the concerns mentioned in paragraphs 55-57 above;

(c) Requested the International Labour Office to prepare for the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, a report on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE), given the Commission's continued role with respect to this classification.

CHAPTER V

SERVICE STATISTICS

61. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at its 438th and 439th meetings, on 5 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General containing a review of the work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics (E/CN.3/1991/15) and a note by the Secretariat containing the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics on a model survey of computer services (E/CN.3/1991/16). The Commission decided to consider each document separately, since the report of the Voorburg Group dealt with a specific technical aspect of service statistics, whereas the report of the Secretary-General focused on broader topics and issues concerning the development of service statistics.

A model survey of computer services

62. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the report of the Voorburg Group on a model survey of computer services. The model provided excellent guidance for countries contemplating an expansion of the coverage of service activities in that important and evolving field of statistics. Some members indicated their intention to incorporate certain features of the model survey in their data collection systems. It was recognized that the experience gained in implementing the model survey of computer services would contribute to the refinement of the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC). The Commission was pleased to learn that the preliminary results of pilot studies using the model survey instrument would be presented at the 1991 meeting of the Voorburg Group. To ensure adequate circulation of the report of the Voorburg Group, the Commission requested the Statistical Office to arrange for its publication, with a suitable introduction, as part of the regular United Nations methodological series. The publication should be widely distributed.

63. In the course of the discussion of the contribution of the Voorburg Group, some members expressed the view that the Group should prepare model surveys for other complex service activities, such as technical planning and consulting, management consulting, finance and insurance. The view was also expressed that the Voorburg Group should embark on the testing of standards through the pooling of volunteer resources. The Commission recognized the important role of the Voorburg Group in advancing service statistics and decided that the Group should report on a substantive topic at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.

Action taken by the Commission

64. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to arrange for the publication and distribution of the Voorburg Group report on a model survey of computer services, with a suitable introduction, as part of its regular methodological reports;

(b) Welcomed the continued contribution of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics to the work of the Statistical Commission and international statistics;

(c) Invited the Voorburg Group to prepare a report on a substantive topic for the twenty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission.

Work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics

65. The Commission expressed its satisfaction with the comprehensive account of national experiences and the initiatives of international agencies contained in the Secretary-General's report. The Commission recognized the potential usefulness of the report as a reference in connection with facilitating country-to-country cooperation, avoidance of duplicative efforts among international agencies and furthering collaborative efforts among national agencies in methodological work. The Commission stressed that in carrying out studies of national practices the fullest use should be made of the methodological studies already undertaken by other international organizations. That approach would avoid placing the unnecessary burden of duplicative studies on national statistical offices.

66. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the ongoing work of ECE, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), IMF, the secretariat of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), OECD and EUROSTAT. The Commission was informed that a joint EUROSTAT/ECE Working Group would meet with non-Community members in March 1991 to discuss the EUROSTAT manual on service statistics and the model survey of computer services. The Commission also welcomed the initiatives of ECE in respect of transition countries.

67. In its discussion of the collaboration between national and international agencies in the development of service statistics, the Commission endorsed the role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat as the continuing secretariat of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. In that regard, the Commission stressed the need for the Statistical Office and interested international agencies to create new capacities to advance work and knowledge in service statistics. Accordingly, the Commission recommended that the Statistical Office effect a wider dissemination of technical materials, including reports prepared by the Voorburg Group, and introduce a mechanism for processing feedback from national statistical authorities.

68. The Commission stressed the importance of involving the developing countries in work on the development of service statistics. It was clearly evident that statisticians in developing countries were experiencing a combination of methodological, data collection and organizational problems in the field of service statistics. The Commission was pleased to note that it was possible to arrange for selected developing countries to participate in the annual meetings of the Voorburg Group. However, it was noted that the number of developing countries currently participating in the Voorburg Group was very small and not broadly representative. The Commission reiterated that, in spite of its valuable contribution, the Voorburg Group could not replace the traditional methods of developing international statistical

methodology (regional meetings, consultant studies, expert group meetings). The view was expressed that, in addition to access to methodology, there might be a need for pilot studies to determine the requirements for advancing service statistics in the developing countries.

69. The Commission expressed its support for the inclusion of work covering methodology, technical cooperation and coordination in the 1992-1993 work programme of the Statistical Office. The priorities and the order of activities in methodological work involving price and quantity indexes were considered acceptable. With regard to technical cooperation, the Commission emphasized the need for advisory services and regional seminars. The Commission stressed the importance of promoting coordination among interested international agencies and emphasized that the Statistical Office should cooperate closely with the Voorburg Group in order to establish a standard format for the presentation of the draft guidelines on price and volume measures. It was feared that data compilation at that early stage in the development of service statistics might lead to the emergence of rigid structures in definitions and classifications.

Action taken by the Commission

70. The Commission:

(a) Supported the proposed activities in service statistics for the biennium 1992-1993 in respect of methodology, technical cooperation and the promotion of coordination. More specifically, the Commission recommended the following priorities in methodology: (i) further review of national practices in price and volume measures; (ii) establishment of a standard format for the presentation of the draft guidelines; (iii) use of a standard format to obtain comments and suggestions from countries on the proposed recommendations; and (iv) finalization of countries' contributions to recommendations on the methodology of price and volume measures;

(b) Endorsed the function of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat as the continuing secretariat of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics;

(c) Emphasized the need for the use of traditional processes for developing international recommendations in the field of service statistics, drawing on experience and developments in all regions of the world;

(d) Emphasized the need for coordination among international agencies interested in the development of all aspects of service statistics;

(e) Requested the Statistical Office to arrange for the dissemination of technical materials in order to ensure the visibility of substantive work in service statistics;

(f) Stressed the need for enhancing technical cooperation related to service statistics through advisory services and regional seminars.

CHAPTER VI

PRICE STATISTICS

71. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at its 442nd meeting, on 7 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on developments in phase VI of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and on other related international comparison issues (E/CN.3/1991/17) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. III).

72. The Commission commended the high quality of the report of the Secretary-General on developments in the International Comparison Programme. The issues, particularly those concerning the phase VI comparison, had been examined thoroughly. The Commission expressed appreciation of the comprehensive description of the application of ICP results. It recognized the increasing uses and high informative value of per capita real product, purchasing power parities and other results of ICP. It was proposed that ICP be more widely publicized and that a brochure be provided by the Secretariat to promote the use of ICP data.

73. The Commission noted the status of completion of the phase V comparison, with 1985 as the reference year. While results were available for the European Community, OECD, the European Comparison Programme, the African comparison and the comparison conducted among countries members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), basic data on the Caribbean region had just been submitted. Processing of the global comparison results by EUROSTAT would be started as soon as the processing of the Caribbean results had been completed. It was anticipated, therefore, that the report of the phase V global comparisons would be finalized in the second half of 1991, as a joint publication of the organizations concerned. The Commission noted with regret the long time lag in producing the results of the phase V comparisons, although it recognized that the delay for phase V was similar to that experienced in previous phases of ICP.

74. With one or two reservations, the Commission expressed strong support for the Programme. Many members were of the view that the purchasing power parities resulting from the Programme would be a qualitatively superior substitute for the present use of exchange rates in international comparisons.

75. The Commission took note of certain limitations of the 1985 global results, in addition to those stemming from the time-lag in their publication. It recognized that the small number of core countries introduced a degree of uncertainty in the links between regional comparisons.

76. The view was widely expressed that in the longer term ICP-related work had to be integrated into the mainstream of statistical work at the national level. There was a need to emphasize expenditure estimates in addition to the improvement of price series. The importance of making ICP more relevant to national policies was also stressed.

77. The Commission considered that in the long run a better integration of ICP work with regular national statistical activities should be achieved, especially in the field of price statistics. Thus the additional burden on countries incurred by their participation in the Programme could be considerably reduced.

78. The Commission welcomed the significant support for various activities of phase VI of the Programme provided by several countries and a number of regional and international organizations. The OECD and European Community comparisons for phase VI were carried out on a rolling basis and results for reference year 1990 were expected to be ready by the end of the year. In Eastern Europe, five countries had started 1990 comparisons, coordinated by the Austrian Statistical Office.

79. With regard to the developing regions, the Commission acknowledged with appreciation the support provided by the Government of Japan that had enabled the phase VI comparison to be launched in the ESCAP region, with 15 participating countries and 1992 as the reference year. In addition to providing financial and in-kind support to the Asia-Pacific Seminar on the Use of Purchasing Power Parities, organized by ESCAP, for the ESCAP comparison, the Government of Japan had offered to provide regional advisory services. The Commission took note of possible new sources of finance for phase VI in the ECLAC region. It was informed that the Inter-American Development Bank and the ECLAC secretariat had begun discussions which could lead to support for a regional comparison in 1993. The Commission expressed appreciation of the continued interest of the European Community in supporting the comparison in the African region. Finally, the Commission was pleased to learn of the World Bank's plans to develop portable software for use by participating countries and regional commissions and to build up an electronic network for better communication between ICP-related organizations. The Bank would furthermore make available resources to foster comparison work in developing regions, channel funds for organizing workshops and provide technical assistance at the country level.

80. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved in the preparation of the first draft of the handbook on ICP with the support of consultants to the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the European Community, as well as with the support of the World Bank, and urged the Statistical Office to make arrangements to revise the present draft and issue an interim version of the handbook for immediate use by countries participating in the phase VI comparison. It welcomed the offers made by the Government of the United States of America and the World Bank to provide assistance for the finalization of the handbook.

81. The Commission was of the opinion that the regionalization, and consequently the decentralization, of the processing of information established a closer connection between the input countries provided and the output they received. It considered that that could contribute to a better use of ICP results for analytical purposes at the national level. EUROSTAT indicated that, if necessary, it was prepared to assume responsibility for processing the global results as it had done in phase V.

82. The Commission recommended that a global comparison be carried out in phase VI. It noted that most of the necessary preconditions for a

satisfactory global comparison had been met, but that there might still be insufficient resources at the global level to ensure that all necessary travel could be carried out. The Commission stressed that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat had to maintain close contact with organizers of the regional comparisons to ensure the required degree of consistency among the comparisons and improve comparability of the basic data collected and processed in the developing regions. The Commission noted that the character of the report on the global comparisons for phase VI of ICP would depend on the degree of consistency that could be achieved.

83. The Commission was of the opinion that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat should perform a central role in ICP, focusing on the coordination of the global comparison and dissemination of technical documents to ensure the integrity of the global comparison and promote the implementation of a uniform methodology for ICP. The Commission recognized that a number of developing countries, particularly those participating in ICP for the first time, required technical support and advice from the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. It endorsed the division of responsibilities between the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the organizers of the regional comparisons and concluded that carrying out operational tasks at the regional level would be the latter's responsibility.

84. The Commission suggested that work on the global comparison be organized according to the proposed timetable. There was a need, however, to elaborate a more refined schedule of work at both the regional and global levels.

85. The Commission stressed the necessity of holding frequent consultations among the organizations involved in ICP work in order to resolve undetermined methodological and organizational issues and to work out strategies for overcoming various kinds of difficulties that would impede the timely completion of phase VI. It was stressed that that aim could be achieved only by close cooperation and joint efforts of the organizations concerned. The importance of the role of the Intersecretariat Working Group on the International Comparison Programme was emphasized.

86. Several members of the Commission made proposals on particular points of the methodology. The Commission discussed the attributes of the core country method versus the core commodity approach and said that core commodities might be used to facilitate linking regional results in phase VI. It was suggested that a group of experts be established to consider details relating to the core commodity approach. The Commission recognized that the change-over to the core commodity approach would entail a shift of workload from countries to the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. It noted that the Statistical Office was working to complete the core commodity list, which would be made available for incorporation into the regional lists of commodities.

Action taken by the Commission

87. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the status of completion of phase V of ICP and urged that the global results be published as quickly as possible;

(b) Emphasized strongly the need to establish ICP-related work as a regular feature of statistical work at the national level, thereby making ICP policy relevant and ensuring its long-term viability;

(c) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to expedite the completion, publication and dissemination of the handbook on ICP;

(d) Emphasized the need for the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to perform a central coordinating role in the implementation of ICP;

(e) Stressed the importance of convening meetings of the Intersecretariat Working Group on the International Comparison Programme so that technical and organizational issues could be agreed upon;

(f) Reaffirmed the regionalization of ICP as the basic approach to obtaining internationally comparable results;

(g) Recognized that the core commodity approach might be a more satisfactory methodology for linking regional comparisons; agreed that a group of experts be convened to resolve the technical issues involved; and also agreed that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat should continue with the preparation of the core commodity lists and the related work needed to support the comparison work in the developing regions;

(h) Encouraged wider publicity of the results of ICP and their uses at the national and international levels;

(i) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, a report on developments in phase VI of ICP and on other related international comparison issues.

CHAPTER VII

INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS

88. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 437th and 438th meetings, on 4 and 5 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the World Programme of Industrial Statistics (E/CN.3/1991/18) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. IV).

89. The Commission expressed overall support for the industrial statistics programme. Such a programme was necessary regardless of whether the industrial sector was growing or declining relative to other sectors of the economy. The Commission stressed the importance of the role of industrial statistics in the context of all economic statistics, including the System of National Accounts (SNA) and pointed out that industrial data were an essential basis for national accounts estimations and other applications. The importance of international comparability among national programmes was also stressed.

90. The Commission noted that country participation in the World Programme of Industrial Statistics had improved slightly between 1973 and 1983. Many members expressed disappointment, however, that the pace of growth had not been faster. The Commission expressed concern about the lack of information on why systems of industrial statistics had not been established more widely. It was of the opinion that the subject deserved analysis. It noted with regret that the statistical results of the 1983 World Programme had not yet been published. Several members gave their views on the dimensions of the problem, including the general reduction of resources for statistics. Industrial statistics often suffered because of the lower priority assigned to it by national statistical offices. In addition, important changes had affected the availability of resources and changed the structure or orientation of the statistical programme.

91. In considering the overall strategy for the next World Programme, the Commission reviewed the respective roles of benchmark inquiries and annual surveys. It stressed that the production of timely and reliable annual statistical series was the primary concern of the Programme. The series were needed for examining the industrial sector and for various macroeconomic analyses and monitoring. The Commission noted that a major role of benchmark inquiries, such as population and agricultural censuses, was to help improve the quality and coverage of annual data by providing a universe for sampling and a framework for interpreting the data.

92. The Commission was of the view, however, that in certain cases the emphasis that had continued to be placed on the need for benchmark enumerations might have contributed to the lack of progress. Several members mentioned that the benchmark enumeration was an extremely demanding type of survey in both developed and developing countries. At the same time, the creation and maintenance of business registers was described as an expensive alternative that was difficult to sustain. Nevertheless, the Commission

recognized that industrial statistics could not be interpreted correctly unless the universe to which the data referred had been well defined.

93. Several members of the Commission described a number of strategies that were currently used to carry out an economic survey programme on a step-by-step basis. It was pointed out that such partial approaches not only offered a short cut to statistical information on the most important industries but also provided a solid basis for capability-building for economic surveys. The need to focus on the 1993 World Programme was questioned; the view was expressed that more emphasis was needed on promoting annual inquiries. In view of those considerations, the Commission suggested that a technical report be prepared as part of the documentation for the 1993 World Programme. The report would further examine various strategies for capturing reliable and timely information on industrial activity and discuss the relative merits of the methods and approaches used.

94. The Commission agreed that 1993 was the most appropriate reference year, at least as a label for the next round, although it was recognized that some countries would need to use other years in order to coordinate the timing of their industrial enumerations with their other inquiries and statistical activities. Some members expressed a preference for 1994 or some other year. Several members pointed out that there were advantages in fixed periodicity within national statistical programmes. Accordingly, the Commission endorsed 1993 as the reference year for the next World Programme, but agreed that there should be some flexibility at the national level, as required.

95. The Commission was pleased to note that the conceptual and practical topics for the next World Programme of Industrial Statistics, contained in section II of the report of the Secretary-General, incorporated comments and suggestions made by many organizations, including the regional commissions, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), IMF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), GATT and the African Development Bank. Nevertheless, it was considered that the full list would place too heavy a burden on national statistical offices. The Commission expressed the view that the framework for the next World Programme should be kept very simple to help encourage wider country participation.

96. In their consideration of the conceptual topics, many members were of the view that resources should not be diverted from higher priority and more basic issues to those topics. The Commission noted that the greater the burden imposed on the training workshops in terms of topics to be covered in preparation for the World Programme, the less likely would be the success of the next round. Several members commented on the relative merits of the inclusion of financial or environmental data, the linking of industrial inquiries with SNA, the treatment of household and small-scale industry and the informal sector, non-industrial activities of industrial establishments and the expansion of the scope of surveys to include economic activities other than those of industry. The Commission noted the importance of those items among the statistical priorities of individual countries. Accordingly, the modular approach in the form of working papers, proposed for the preparation of documentation to support the next World Programme, was recognized as a useful way of accommodating individual views and priorities with regard to certain topics, resources permitting.

97. Among the various practical topics discussed, the Commission considered that the change-over from revision 2 to revision 3 of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) was the most important and should be assigned the highest priority. Some members expressed interest in the links between the various international commodity and activity classifications, namely the Central Product Classification (CPC), ISIC, the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) and the Harmonized System. It was emphasized that CPC, which was specially created to be compatible with ISIC, Rev.3, and the Harmonized System, should serve as the basic product classification. A few members singled out other practical topics, including a master list of typical main inputs, outputs and waste materials, creation and maintenance of business registers and the use of sampling in industrial inquiries.

98. The Commission recognized the great importance of technical cooperation and emphasized that it should be provided in a timely manner, particularly because some countries had had to suspend participation in the 1983 World Programme owing to resource problems. The Commission noted that the vast majority of developing countries participating in the World Programme were also represented at one of the regional training workshops. Accordingly, the Commission was pleased to note that the workshops had been described as a priority activity and expressed the wish that they could again play an important role. It was pointed out that, since no workshop had been held in the ECLAC region in connection with the 1983 World Programme, there would undoubtedly be great interest in participating in such workshops for the forthcoming round. Some members emphasized that regional training workshops should be held in developing countries that had already carried out a benchmark industrial inquiry. The point was also made that those workshops provided an opportunity to build up the capacity for a system of industrial statistics. The task of mobilizing resources for industrial statistics programmes would be facilitated if their link to the implementation of SNA were stressed.

99. The Commission noted with satisfaction that assistance for technical cooperation projects had already been received from UNIDO, the United States Bureau of the Census and the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. However, the Commission drew attention to the need for additional resources. It was noted that ESCAP had assigned priority to that area in its work programme for the next biennium.

Action taken by the Commission

100. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the continuation of the World Programme of Industrial Statistics to cover as many countries as possible;

(b) Endorsed the need to promote the collection of annual data for policy purposes and the compilation of national accounts;

(c) Noted that although participation in the World Programme in 1985 had increased somewhat compared with 1973, the Programme did not yet cover as large a number of countries as desirable;

(d) Stressed the need to distinguish clearly between survey ends and means when reviewing the various survey options;

(e) Recommended that the International Recommendations for Industrial Statistics 1/ should remain the core document for the next World Programme;

(f) Recommended that new topics be avoided in the next round, unless the necessary resources were available for their implementation;

(g) Assigned first priority to the conversion of data from ISIC, Rev.2, to ISIC, Rev.3, and stressed that the other topics should be kept simple so as not to divert resources from that central task;

(h) Endorsed 1993 as the reference year for the next World Programme of Industrial Statistics, although it recognized that there would of necessity be some variation, depending on national priorities;

(i) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to prepare a technical report as part of the documentation for the 1993 World Programme, setting out the various strategies available to deal with problems of capturing reliable and timely information on industrial activity and taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of such instruments as benchmark inquiries and various kinds of annual surveys, including those covering all or part of the industrial sector, all or some of the size categories of industrial units and all or a part of a country;

(j) Emphasized the importance of technical cooperation for improving the World Programme of Industrial Statistics in the context of national statistical capabilities and requested multilateral and bilateral donors to provide support for such technical cooperation as part of an overall effort to improve economic statistics;

(k) Welcomed the work being done by UNIDO and a number of countries in the collection of industrial data, in support of the World Programme of Industrial Statistics.

Notes

1/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 48, Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.XVII.8).

CHAPTER VIII

DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

A. Population and housing censuses

101. The Commission considered item 9 (a) of its agenda at its 442nd and 443rd meetings, on 7 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the general development and integration of methodological work, including experience and progress made in international classifications (E/CN.3/1991/24, sect. II.D) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. V and annex II).

102. The Commission welcomed the progress report on the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme and expressed appreciation for the ongoing national, regional and global efforts to implement the Programme. In that regard, members expressed their appreciation for the substantive support and role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and indicated that they would continue to need that support in the future in various areas, including, for example, census planning, census cartography, data processing and dissemination, census evaluation, analysis and utilization of census results and intercensal surveys.

103. The Commission welcomed the publication of the Supplementary Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, the Use of Microcomputers for Census Data Processing and the Manual on Population Census Data Processing Using Microcomputers, which were designed to assist countries in census preparation and in the timely processing and dissemination of census data. It was pleased to learn of the preparation by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat of a revised series of population and housing census handbooks drawn from the experience of many national census administrative reports, census questionnaires, enumerator manuals and other census reports, as well as from technical cooperation experience and other sources.

104. The Commission noted the increasing application of microcomputers in census work. In addition to data processing, there was growing interest in the development and use of census databases to make tabulations readily available, as required, for investigating new phenomena and the use of desk-top publishing facilities to avoid delays and help build in-service capability to effectively disseminate census results. However, the Commission cautioned that the confidentiality of individuals must be protected when micro-records were disseminated; for example, through records that had been made anonymous.

105. The Commission stressed the importance of the use of census results by various government departments and research organizations, including secondary analysis and promotion of the usefulness of data among the public. It was suggested that a basic programme designed to promote the use of census data in national census programmes should include the preparation of general audience popular reports on selected census topics, census monographs, census life

tables and population projections, in addition to the traditional publications and machine-readable census products.

106. During the discussion, the question of the use of population registers as an alternative to a population census was raised. However, the Commission considered that, for most countries, population and housing censuses constituted one of the cornerstones of the national statistical system, since relatively few countries had the technical and legal instruments to allow population registers and other administrative sources to be applied to collect the same amount of information as population and housing censuses.

107. With respect to methodological studies, the importance of undertaking a study of the cost of population and housing censuses at the regional level was mentioned. Based on the previous experience of the Secretariat, such studies were complex and the results could easily be misinterpreted. That was due to the great variation among countries in the way censuses were carried out in terms of the use of personnel and other resources of national, provincial and local government departments, as well as volunteer enumerators and contributions from the private sector. Consequently, the total cost was difficult to obtain on a comparable basis across countries.

108. Members pointed out the significant and positive impact of technical cooperation activities with financial support, particularly from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in enhancing national efforts to carry out population and housing censuses. The important role of the assistance provided by the United Nations regional commissions was also stressed.

109. Finally, the Commission noted that many of the issues discussed under the present item were also relevant to issues discussed under agenda item 11 (Technical cooperation) (see chap. X).

Action taken by the Commission

110. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its satisfaction with the work carried out by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the regional commissions and other bodies in connection with the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme, expressed its appreciation to the multilateral and bilateral donors, particularly UNFPA, for their considerable support, which had contributed to the success of the Programme, and stressed the need for continued support;

(b) Emphasized the importance of census methodological studies, including handbooks, guides and manuals, and requested their timely publication and wide distribution to countries;

(c) Recommended the effective dissemination and utilization of census data at national, regional and community levels and their analysis oriented towards policies and programmes with special reference to women and special population groups such as children, the elderly and the disabled;

(d) Recommended that in its future work, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat give increased emphasis to housing censuses and related issues;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to report to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-seventh session on progress made in the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme and preparations for the next world programme.

B. Civil registration and vital statistics

111. The Commission considered item 9 (b) of its agenda at its 443rd meeting, on 7 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress in civil registration and vital statistics (E/CN.3/1991/19) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. VI).

112. The Commission was of the opinion that the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.3/1991/19) provided valuable and timely information on the progress made in the field of civil registration and vital statistics in different parts of the world since the subject had last been discussed by the Commission (in 1981, at the twenty-first session). It expressed satisfaction that the revised Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods and the study on approaches in population censuses to collecting information for estimating vital rates had been completed. It requested that the Handbook be disseminated widely for use by national registration authorities, statistical offices and others concerned with the subject. The Commission emphasized the importance of national civil registration systems and the collection and compilation of vital statistics, nationally and internationally, for the timely and cost-effective monitoring of population, health and related programmes.

113. The Commission welcomed the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, developed jointly by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNFPA and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, and gave its strong support to the programme. It noted with satisfaction that a number of other organizations, including the United Nations regional commissions, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the International Statistical Institute, would participate in the implementation of the Programme. The Commission invited other international, regional and bilateral organizations to participate in and support the Programme.

114. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Programme was country oriented and employed a number of new strategies designed to overcome some of the weaknesses of recent technical cooperation efforts in the field of civil registration and vital statistics in order to allow sustainability nationally. Such strategies involved (a) the structured diagnosis of problems on a country-by-country basis; (b) concentration on the improvement of national civil registration systems rather than pilot studies; (c) adoption by countries of national registration improvement plans along with the commitment

of necessary national support; and (d) initial focus on those developing countries which offered the best opportunities for achieving complete registration of events in the short run so that the lessons learned could be applied to other developing countries.

115. Some members expressed concern about the willingness of countries to invest the resources and staff necessary to participate in the Programme and about their long-term commitment to continue civil registration operations since improvement of the civil registration and vital statistics systems in developing countries could, in certain circumstances, require a large amount of financial resources. It was pointed out that in many countries, improvement of national civil registration and vital statistics systems would require not only that methodological problems be solved but that socio-cultural, legal and administrative obstacles be overcome. Motivation of the population was seen as a critical factor in improving national registration systems. However, the Commission was of the opinion that the new strategies embodied in the Programme might help to overcome a number of those obstacles. It expressed the hope that the guidelines adopted by donor organizations in the field of civil registration and vital statistics would be reviewed in the light of the Programme's strategies. In that regard, the Commission recommended that monitoring to evaluate programme achievements be continued.

116. Many Commission members from developing countries referred to their experience in upgrading their national registration systems. They attached great importance to the Programme and expressed interest in joining it so as to strengthen civil registration and improve the availability of vital statistics in their countries.

117. The Commission welcomed the financial support provided by UNFPA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the initial phase of the Programme and the willingness of UNFPA to commit additional funds for the period 1992-1995. It noted that a portion of UNFPA support was conditional upon other multilateral or bilateral organizations matching that support.

118. The Commission stressed the importance of coordination of activities among the various organizations participating in the Programme. It expressed its appreciation of the offer made by UNFPA to act as the focal point for coordinating multilateral and bilateral resources for the Programme. The coordination role would be carried out in close cooperation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, which would be responsible for overall substantive coordination.

119. The Commission urged the organizations sponsoring the Programme to conduct promotional activities world wide and to proceed with the implementation of the Programme. The work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with the regional commissions and PAHO, was particularly stressed.

120. The Commission welcomed the suggestion to conduct workshops in Latin America and Africa as part of the Programme and expressed its appreciation to the Government of Argentina for offering to act as host for one of the workshops. The Commission emphasized that the objective of any workshop should be clearly defined before it was organized.

Action taken by the Commission

121. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the phased implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems and expressed its appreciation to the organizations that had developed the Programme and to UNFPA and UNICEF for providing initial financial support;

(b) Stressed the central role of national efforts in the success of the Programme, including diagnosis of obstacles to complete and timely registration and the adoption of national registration improvement plans along with the commitment of the necessary national support;

(c) Accepted the offer of UNFPA to provide the mechanism for coordinating support for the Programme from other multilateral and bilateral organizations and noted the importance of a coordinated approach;

(d) Urged the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with the regional commissions, WHO, PAHO and the International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, among others, to proceed with the training and other components of the Programme as rapidly as possible;

(e) Requested the Secretary-General to keep the Commission informed about the progress achieved in implementing the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems and related methodological work.

C. Social statistics and indicators

122. The Commission considered item 9 (c) of its agenda at its 444th meeting, on 8 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the development of a coordinated United Nations system database for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest and the development of related national databases (E/CN.3/1991/20), the report of the Secretary-General on general development and integration of methodological work, including experience and progress made in international classifications (E/CN.3/1991/24) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. VII).

123. The Commission expressed its great appreciation of the technical quality of the reports and discussed a number of technical issues raised in them. The complex nature of social phenomena and the considerable skills and resources necessary to measure them reliably were particularly emphasized. It was agreed that the efficient organization of data sources and availability of the necessary skills in countries were key factors for the success of monitoring. The necessary mobilization and organization of country resources would have to be tackled on a country-by-country basis. It was also agreed that one of the key requirements, which was very difficult to meet, was the organization and interpretation of the complex statistics needed in the reports, which could reach a wide and non-specialized audience.

124. The Commission considered in some detail the appropriate role and orientation of social indicators programmes at the national, regional and international levels in the context of practical requirements for monitoring, planning and evaluation. The Commission welcomed the comments of the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund on policy applications at the country level of indicators in fields of concern to various related organizations of the United Nations system. The Commission agreed that considerable effort was needed to implement indicator programmes responsive to the highest priority social concerns and objectives established and approved by Governments in key international forums and within the framework of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. Such programmes should comprise a mix of data collection activities and techniques as well as methods of analysis, compilation and coordination and would require technical cooperation support for many developing countries. Programmes needed full professional support and strong leadership.

125. Programmes should be geared to operational requirements in countries to support policy decisions and programme implementation in addition to monitoring. Data should be provided on a virtually continuous basis and be up to date. The Commission agreed that programmes should be geared to providing a selected number of core series in social statistics. However, it was essential that they be collected, compiled and analysed in sufficient detail, with possibilities of disaggregation by small geographical areas and special population groups, to show real progress and bring out issues in the social fields. It was recognized that general averages and estimates had limited uses and could be misleading. The Commission expressed strong doubts that composite or unitary indices of social progress were technically sound and appropriate for international comparisons, although the Commission realized that a number of users of data found such indicators valuable.

126. Several members expressed the view that much more work was needed to clarify the statistical implications and better develop the methods needed to measure the social goals and objectives referred to in the reports before the Commission. In that context, the representative of the World Bank expressed regret that more use had not been made of the framework and methods developed by the Bank for measuring living standards.

127. The representative of the World Bank expressed reservations about the design, content and form of the initiative. He questioned the thrust of the initiative as it did not identify the audience. The needs of countries and international agencies had not been clearly articulated. The programme did not deal adequately with conceptual and measurement issues. He raised the question how did the programme relate to other ongoing initiatives of the United Nations system, including those of the World Bank. He pointed out that the programme did not take account of methodological work undertaken by the Bank.

128. The Commission agreed that the programme of pilot studies referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1991/20) would provide practical experience and an assessment at the country level of statistical gaps that the monitoring programme could address as well as technical parameters of a full-scale programme. That, in turn, would provide a sound basis for focusing the programme on core data requirements and indicators and determining

realistically the steps to be taken to ensure that needs were met. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the additional valuable experience provided by the case studies described by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in its report submitted to the Commission for consideration under item 9 (d) (E/CN.3/1991/21).

129. The Commission endorsed the programme for monitoring the achievement of social goals in the 1990s. It agreed that the technical, organizational and policy challenges posed by monitoring requirements were formidable but was of the opinion that action on a major programme along the lines described in the report was timely and urgent and that the pilot studies should be implemented as soon as possible. The adverse trends in human development in many countries in the past decade had drawn new attention to the need for better monitoring and indicators and demonstrated clearly that urgent action was necessary. New opportunities and new awareness of social concerns and disparities could support and sustain a sound monitoring programme. The Commission noted a number of regional activities and initiatives already under way which provided essential experience and momentum in the field of social statistics and indicators, such as the new annual social report on Latin America and the Caribbean, paralleling the annual economic report of ECLAC. The social report would provide, for the first time, regular and timely indicators for the region on such pressing issues as employment, distribution of income, poverty, children and youth.

130. The Commission stressed the importance of a concrete and pragmatic approach to monitoring; it fully appreciated the challenges involved, however. Data collection programmes and country capacities should not be overloaded nor should new programmes be undertaken which might duplicate, overlap or compete with existing ones. The Commission agreed that it was essential to carefully select priorities in statistical work and make the fullest use of data generated by the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) programme sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Pan-Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD) executed by the League of Arab States, the Inter-Agency Food and Nutritional Surveillance Programme (IFNS) sponsored by UNICEF, FAO and WHO and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project, both executed by the World Bank.

131. The Commission discussed in detail the importance of full coordination at three levels: between institutions within a country; among international organizations at the country and international levels; and between countries and international organizations. Those efforts should involve, inter alia, coordination and agreement in choice and technical specification of indicators for monitoring. The Commission agreed that countries should take the initiative to ensure adequate coordination in indicators collection and analysis activities at the national level but noted the problems faced by developing countries trying to ensure such coordination. It noted with concern that national statistical services had to deal with a multiplicity of multilateral and bilateral agencies interested in statistical and monitoring issues, many of which dealt directly with other substantive ministries in their Governments. Sectoral programmes tended to call for a wide and proliferating range of indicators that often overlapped and were not standardized technically. In spite of those obstacles, a number of successful

social statistics programmes were cited in which technical cooperation had greatly contributed to improved social statistics. The Commission welcomed the possibilities for improved coordination described in the report on monitoring (E/CN.3/1991/20).

132. The Commission welcomed the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with and with support from many other organizations, on statistics on special population groups, including disabled persons, the elderly and young people. It expressed particular appreciation of the contribution made by the Statistical Office to focusing world-wide attention and development efforts on statistics on disabled persons, including publication of the Disability Statistics Compendium, and on the elderly, and noted with satisfaction the support for the work on disability statistics expressed by the representative of Disabled Persons International. The Commission agreed that statistics on disabled persons was a particularly complex field in which countries were anxious to have international support and guidance and welcomed the proposal of the Statistical Office to convene, with WHO, an expert group to review applications of the WHO International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH).

133. The Commission expressed strong support for the work of the Statistical Office in the development of statistics on women. The work included methodology, compilation and training for measuring women's contribution in the economy and the informal sector, drawing on the framework of national accounts, and technical cooperation.

134. The Commission expressed particular appreciation of the extent of coordination and collaboration achieved in the United Nations system in the programmes on women's statistics and special population groups. It noted that those programmes provided invaluable experience and inputs to the monitoring programme; it fully supported the continuation and further development of those programmes.

Action by the Commission

135. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the interest and progress of both developed and developing countries in improving their social statistics and indicators suitable for monitoring social progress and objectives and guiding policy;

(b) Commended the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO for the progress achieved in technical and organizational planning for the programme for social monitoring in the 1990s;

(c) Endorsed the overall effort to develop a programme for national capacity-building for monitoring social goals in the 1990s and recommended the fastest possible action to implement the programme on a pragmatic basis, with a view to ensuring quick results;

(d) Recommended that the participating organizations in the social monitoring and evaluation effort intensify their efforts to ensure the

broadest possible national, regional and international participation and contributions to the programme, consistent with ensuring focused priority on a limited set of indicators;

(e) Suggested that the participating organizations and countries work together to ensure the greatest possible cost-effectiveness in data collection, tabulation and analysis for the desired indicators and in coordinated international social reporting;

(f) Endorsed the work programme and activities of the Statistical Office on statistics on women and on special population groups and recommended the maximum possible support for countries interested in developing their statistics in that field;

(g) Noted the reservations expressed by the World Bank on the form, content and thrust of the programme;

(h) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session a report on the programme to monitor the achievement of social goals in the 1990s and related methodological work.

D. Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development

136. The Commission considered item 9 (d) of its agenda at its 443rd meeting, on 7 February 1991. It had before it the report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) entitled "Case studies carried out by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on qualitative aspects of development and on the preparations for the planned international statistical meeting on indicators of patterns of consumption" (E/CN.3/1991/21).

137. The Commission noted that four activities had been carried out: four country case studies (Côte d'Ivoire, India, Kenya, Morocco), a synthesis report based on those studies, a longer monograph drawing upon the recent literature and the past work of UNRISD on development indicators, and preparations for an international meeting of experts scheduled to be held at Rabat, Morocco, from 8 to 11 April 1991.

138. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the high quality of the report prepared by UNRISD. The Institute had done an excellent job of synthesizing useful findings and policy suggestions from the four case studies and from the Institute's past work. In particular, the Commission stressed the need to draw lessons from the case studies for the design of new and ongoing programmes by national authorities and the international development community. Particularly useful points in the report concerned the strengths and limitations of different data sources, the need to use the available data with care and caution, the problems identified in the case studies in using unitary or composite indices, the problems caused by data overloads and high costs, brought about by ambitious survey and other statistical programmes that exceeded the capacity of countries and the considerable scope for low-cost, innovative techniques. At the same time, the Commission considered it important that such innovative measurement techniques be placed in the context

of ongoing statistical programmes of organizations so as to maximize the usefulness of the results obtained.

139. The Commission noted with appreciation the initiative taken by the Government of Morocco to strengthen its efforts to collect a comprehensive set of indicators on social development with assistance from a number of international organizations. It also noted the work of other international agencies in the field, including the work of FAO and WHO, to update and improve indicators on health and nutrition status and the world food situation.

140. The Commission noted the importance and timeliness of the international meeting of experts at Rabat, which would provide an opportunity to review the state of the art and recent advances in thinking on development indicators. It would also be an occasion for the discussion of some of the major initiatives taken by international agencies to strengthen the work on social indicators in developing countries. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Government of Morocco and UNRISD for the preparatory work done for the seminar. It also noted with appreciation the close inter-agency cooperation that had taken place in planning the meeting.

Action by the Commission

141. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the work done by UNRISD in close cooperation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other international agencies, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/179;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to the Government of Morocco, which is to act as host to the international meeting of experts on social indicators of development to be held at Rabat from 8 to 11 April 1991;

(c) Urged UNRISD, in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other agencies, to disseminate widely the findings and lessons of the case studies contained in the report prepared by UNRISD;

(d) Emphasized the importance of linking innovative indicators and collection techniques with ongoing statistical programmes and organizations;

(e) Requested the Subcommittee on Statistical Activity of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to include the item in question on the agenda of its next meeting with a view to considering how the conclusions and suggestions contained in the UNRISD report might assist in the modification of ongoing work and design of new programmes on social indicators.

E. Environment statistics

142. The Commission considered item 9 (e) of its agenda at its 439th, 441st and 442nd meetings, on 5, 6 and 7 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on methods of environment statistics developed under the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians

(E/CN.3/1991/22), the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the development of environment statistics (E/CN.3/1991/23) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. VIII).

143. The Commission recognized that world-wide concern about environmental problems was creating increased demand for environment statistics and indicators at national, regional and global levels. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was expected to accelerate that process. It was regretted that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat had been unable to secure extrabudgetary resources or to mobilize other external support for the rapid implementation of the work programme in environment statistics, as requested by the Commission at its twenty-fifth session. The Commission realized that under those circumstances, progress in the development, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics and related coordination activities would be limited.

144. The Commission expressed its great appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Conference of European Statisticians in the development of environmental classifications and pertinent definitions. Several of those classifications - in particular, of land use, water use and quality, ambient air quality, and fauna, flora and habitat statistics - could be adapted for use in countries in other parts of the world, step-by-step and after further examination and testing. The Commission requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to give priority to those efforts in its work programme.

145. The Commission, as it had done at previous sessions, emphasized the need to strengthen the coordinating role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in an area which had been developing rapidly and in which a multitude of actors had generated an even greater multitude of activities. The Commission considered that the newly formed Intersecretariat Working Group on Environmental Data would focus its work on the coordination of international databases and related data. One of the major tasks of the Group was to prepare an inventory of international environmental databases. It was emphasized that rather than establishing a master database such an inventory should foster cooperation in international data collection.

146. The Commission noted with appreciation the progress made in the preparation of technical reports on the concepts and methods of environment statistics and in the development of environmental accounting. Several members and organizations indicated their strong interest in environmental accounting, which should be developed as a satellite system of SNA. The Commission welcomed the joint efforts of the World Bank and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in testing the framework for a set of satellite accounts in several developing countries. The representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) informed the Commission of the successful use of the technical report on human settlements statistics in the development of an international survey of urban environmental indicators.

147. The establishment of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics (the Oslo Group) was welcomed, and

strong support was expressed for the initial work and activities undertaken by the Group. It was felt that bilateral collaboration between a developed and developing country established by the Group was a useful step towards adapting ECE classification for use in countries in other parts of the world. The Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat should provide strong support to the work of the Group. It was pointed out that such support would require strengthening the ability of the Statistical Office to organize, service and coordinate the different activities of the Group and to ensure appropriate follow-up.

148. Several members described their experience in and plans for developing environment statistics in their own countries. Similarly, the regional commissions and other international organizations informed the Commission of their current and future activities in that field.

149. It was pointed out that environmental data collection was lagging behind the methodological development of environment statistics. International data compilation should make use of secondary sources of statistics by drawing on existing databases, especially the incorporation of scientific data, and by rearranging conventional social, demographic and economic statistics.

150. In response to an inquiry about whether the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would resume collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the Commission was informed that UNEP collaborated closely with the Statistical Office and the World Bank in the area of natural resource accounting. However, regarding other areas of environment statistics, UNEP considered its role as largely catalytic and did not intend to extend further support to those areas.

151. The representative of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) expressed the interest and willingness of the Institute to continue its collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, in particular in providing training materials, establishing a glossary of environmental statistics terms and creating a network of environmental statisticians. ISI also invited the Statistical Office to participate in a recently established working party on environment statistics.

152. The Commission stressed the need for experts in the field of environment statistics and requested that high priority be given to the training of national statisticians in developing countries. The development of appropriate tools and statistical guidelines was considered essential. The Government of Mexico and ISI indicated their willingness and ability to assist the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in those efforts.

153. The Commission expressed its support, in principle, for the proposed expanded work programme in environment statistics. However, it was felt that priorities needed to be set in order to obtain a more focused and cost-effective work programme. Activities of high priority should include the coordination of international work, the adaptation of environmental classifications developed by the Conference of European Statisticians for use in countries in other parts of the world, a presentation of best country practices focusing on the compilation of key environmental indicators, environmental satellite accounting and the establishment of an inventory of relevant international databases. However, it was recognized that even that

concentration on priority activities would require additional resources, not only financial resources but high-quality human resources as well. In addition, the importance of technical cooperation and training and of limited compilation and dissemination of high-priority statistical series was stressed.

Action taken by the Commission

154. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the increasing importance of and demand for environment statistics, which were needed in support of environmentally sound policies and programmes at national, regional and global levels;

(b) Welcomed the preparation of technical reports on the concepts and methods of environment statistics, which it considered a useful framework for the establishment or further development of national programmes of environment statistics;

(c) Expressed its appreciation of the methodological work carried out under the aegis of the Conference of European Statisticians and requested that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat give priority to adaptation of the ECE standard statistical classifications for application in countries in other parts of the world;

(d) Expressed its appreciation for the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics, welcomed bilateral cooperation between developing and developed countries initiated by the Group, and considered such cooperation a useful means of examining the adaptability of ECE classifications to the conditions and capabilities of developing countries;

(e) Requested that future work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat should be cost-effective and focus on the following priority activities, although their implementation would require additional staff resources, and noted that the resource implications for those and other activities in the area of environment statistics would be further discussed under agenda item 13 (b) (see chap. XII):

(i) Coordination of international work on environment statistics;

(ii) Adaptation and/or expansion of methodological work carried out under the aegis of the Conference of European Statisticians for application in countries in other parts of the world;

(iii) Survey and analysis of country practices in the organization and implementation of environment statistics programmes with a view to identifying the key environmental indicators that were readily available for national and international data compilation;

(iv) Development of integrated economic/environmental accounting by means of satellite accounts, including the carrying out of national case studies in environmental accounting;

(v) Initial work on compilation and dissemination of international series of environment statistics and indicators, depending on the availability of resources;

(vi) Establishment of inventories of databases and of related statistical work by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(vii) Support for technical cooperation, in particular through country projects and training;

(f) Expressed appreciation to the World Bank and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for their work on developing and testing a framework for a set of satellite accounts and urged that those studies be expanded to cover additional countries;

(g) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, a report on progress made in the development of environment statistics and the implementation of the proposed programme of work.

F. Human settlements statistics

155. The Commission considered item 9 (f) of its agenda at its 446th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the general development and integration of methodological work, including experience and progress made in international classifications (E/CN.3/1991/24, sect. II.E).

156. The Commission noted the work undertaken by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on the further development of housing and human settlements statistics since the twenty-first session of the Commission, when the subject of housing and human settlements statistics had last been discussed. The work included an expert group meeting on human settlements statistics in 1987, convened jointly by the Statistical Office and Habitat; the publication, in 1985, of the Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics, 1983, prepared by the Statistical Office, and, in 1986, of the technical report on Concepts and Methods for Integrating Social and Economic Statistics on Health, Education and Housing (in particular chap. VII), also prepared by the Statistical Office; and the establishment by Habitat of a microcomputer database - Human Settlements Statistical Data Base (HSDB.stat) - in 1990. It was expected that the statistical pocket book entitled Basic Human Settlements Statistics, prepared by Habitat, would be published in March 1991.

157. The Commission noted that the Commission on Human Settlements, in its resolution 12/6, had expressed deep concern about the deletion of the Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics from the work programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and had invited the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session to examine ways and means of resuming the work on the Compendium within the programme of work for the biennium 1990-1991. In response to the concern expressed by the Commission on Human Settlements, the Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, at its thirteenth session, had added

the question of human settlements statistics to the agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission. The Commission was pleased to learn that the Statistical Office, resources permitting, intended to resume work on the publication of human settlements statistics, including the Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics, in cooperation with Habitat, taking advantage of the 1990 round of population and housing censuses, and proposed to include the preparation of a human settlements statistics database and related tabular outputs in its programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993.

158. The Commission supported the initiative of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to promote the development of housing and human settlements statistics and noted with satisfaction the excellent cooperation that existed between the Statistical Office and Habitat in the field of human settlements statistics.

Action taken by the Commission

159. The Commission endorsed the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993 of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in the development of housing and human settlements statistics, including work on methodology and data collection and compilation, to be carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).

CHAPTER IX

DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF METHODOLOGICAL WORK

160. The Commission considered item 10 of its agenda at its 447th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its thirteenth session (E/CN.3/1991/2, sect. V), the report of the Secretary-General on general development and integration of methodological work, including experience and progress made in international classifications (E/CN.3/1991/24, sects. I and II.A, B and C) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. IX).

161. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3) had been published and distributed to the statistical offices of Member States, the regional commissions and international organizations. Attention was drawn to the importance of correspondence tables between ISIC, Rev.2, and ISIC, Rev.3, which, for many countries, were considered useful tools for the implementation of ISIC, Rev.3. The Commission acknowledged the importance and usefulness of the introduction to ISIC, Rev.3, and noted with satisfaction that it was in full conformity with the current draft text of the revised SNA. In addition, some members from countries in transition indicated that the introduction and detailed explanatory notes were found useful for their work during the transition period.

162. The Commission expressed satisfaction that the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC) had been submitted for publication some months before, but urged that its publication and dissemination should be accelerated because a number of countries were waiting to use it in their work. The Commission was pleased to note that some Member States in the process of revising their national classifications were already making use of the provisional CPC in draft form. The view was expressed that it would be useful to obtain information on the ways in which the provisional CPC was being implemented in various countries.

163. The view was also expressed that work on the development of conversion keys between ISIC, Rev.3, and the Classification of Branches of the National Economy (CBNE) of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) should be accelerated to assist countries in transition to implement international economic classifications. It was proposed that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat share the workload in that exercise with the countries concerned, in cooperation with the Statistical Division of ECE, EUROSTAT and OECD, in order to speed up the process of developing the detailed conversion keys. One member requested that assistance be provided at all stages of implementation of ISIC, Rev.3, and should not be limited to workshops and ad hoc advisory services.

164. The Commission noted that the work on international trade statistics and shipping statistics was benefiting from a high degree of cooperation among the various organizations involved. The Commission was informed that the Customs Cooperation Council planned to work on amendments to the Harmonized Commodity

Description and Coding System (HS) effective as of 1 January 1992. There were over 200 amendments, many of which were editorial but some of which might affect the correlation between HS and the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 (SITC, Rev.3), that had been established. A major revision of HS was also under way in accordance with the provisions of the Harmonized System Convention which would be implemented in January 1996. The representative of the Customs Cooperation Council repeated the invitation made at the twenty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission for statisticians to participate in the revision process. The Commission considered that it was important to maintain the correlation between the two classifications, although it recognized that too frequent changes in statistical classifications were not desirable. The point was made that, in the absence of changes to SITC, Rev.3, consequent upon the revision of HS, countries or organizations that converted data from HS into SITC, Rev. 3, would have to make their own interpretations, which might differ, and that was considered undesirable. The Statistical Commission requested its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider at its fourteenth session the question of revising SITC, Rev.3, in the light of the amendments to HS scheduled for implementation in January 1992. In view of the rapid development in technology, the Commission considered that there was a need to review international nomenclature more regularly.

165. The Commission also supported the work under way in the Customs Cooperation Council for the introduction of standard quantity units at the six-digit level of HS. The existing United Nations recommendations, concepts and definitions for international trade statistics made reference to quantity units, but additional work on standardization in that field was important for both international trade and transport statistics. The Commission welcomed the work on the Harmonized System Commodity Database, which would facilitate the application of HS by various users and would contribute to improving the quality of trade statistics.

166. The Commission expressed its appreciation to UNCTAD for providing information on and a demonstration of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA). It welcomed the introduction of version 2.3 of ASYCUDA, which had an improved module for extraction of statistical data, and the software package EUROTRACE developed by EUROSTAT, both of which were expected to enhance the capability of developing countries to compile international trade statistics and thus improve the availability and timeliness of international trade statistics. The Commission noted that 31 countries had implemented or were implementing ASYCUDA and another 57 countries were at earlier stages of investigation or establishing a project.

167. The Commission welcomed the cooperation between the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and UNCTAD, whereby the Statistical Office collected data on goods loaded and unloaded in international seaborne trade and UNCTAD compiled that data with estimates to meet their needs. It reiterated its strong support for resumption of the work on international seaborne trade statistics by the Statistical Office, should additional resources become available.

168. In the field of energy statistics, the Commission noted the work on a new publication on concepts and methods to update a technical report previously issued in 1982, which would serve as a manual for developing countries to

improve their energy statistics methodologies and data compilation activities. The Commission also welcomed the various cooperative activities in that field and the cooperation between the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the State Committee of the USSR on Statistics on the holding of a workshop on petroleum statistics in the Soviet Union in October 1991.

169. It was suggested that it might be uesful to provide an overall report on methodological development. The Commission noted that the report of the Secretary-General had succeeded in keeping the Commission informed of developments in methodological work in certain important fields. Separate reports were not currently required because no major discussion of methodological issues was expected. The Commission had requested that the amount of documentation for its sessions by reduced by summarizing work in areas in which no major discussion was expected. Methodological development had been treated extensively in the reports considered under other agenda items. It would be extremely difficult and a duplication of work to prepare an overall report on methodology within the 24-page limit.

Action taken by the Commission

170. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report on progress in international classifications, international trade and transport statistics and energy statistics and the cooperative efforts contributing to success in those fields, particularly with the Customs Cooperation Council;

(b) Strongly endorsed the proposed work by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat on developing indexes, conversion keys, correspondence tables and related aids for the implementation of ISIC, Rev.3, and the provisional CPC, in close cooperation with other international organizations and Member States;

(c) Recommended that the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat provide guidance to countries in implementing ISIC, Rev.3, and the provisional CPC, including provision of necessary technical cooperation and supplementary documentation;

(d) Welcomed the proposal to share the work of developing detailed conversion keys between ISIC, Rev.3, and CBNE among the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the Statistical Division of ECE, EUROSTAT, OECD and several countries in transition;

(e) Reconfirmed the request made at its twenty-fifth session that the Secretary-General submit to the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, a progress report reviewing national and international work and needs in the field of implementation of ISIC, Rev.3, and the provisional CPC;

(f) Requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider at its fourteenth session the question of revising SITC, Rev.3, in the light of the amendments to HS scheduled for implementation in January 1992.

CHAPTER X

TECHNICAL COOPERATION

A. Technical cooperation in statistics

171. The Commission considered item 11 (a) of its agenda at its 445th and 446th meetings, on 8 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics (E/CN.3/1991/25) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30, sect. X).

172. The Commission welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics and expressed appreciation to the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat for its preparation. It noted that by limiting the data to multilateral agencies, the comparability of information on expenditures had been substantially improved, though limited in scope.

173. The Commission was of the opinion that the inclusion in the report of information on priorities for statistical development reported by the regional commissions, specialized agencies and other multilateral programmes was useful. The Commission noted that the United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation for Development worked within its area of competence, at the request of Member States, in support of the efforts of Member States and the priorities they determined for their own development. For UNDP, national plans and priorities were the frame of reference for operational activities. UNFPA concentrated its resources in those developing countries that had the most serious population problems and the most urgent need for assistance. In addition, UNFPA had increasingly emphasized activities aimed at improving the role and status of women. The overall goal of technical cooperation generally was the attainment of self-reliance in developing countries through national capacity-building.

174. The Commission made a number of suggestions for further improving the report: information should be supplied on expenditure in real terms; agencies supplying information should have an opportunity to review the text of the report before it was made final; information should be provided on personnel by Headquarters and field staff and by short-term and long-term staff; expenditure on technical cooperation in statistics should be compared with the total expenditure for technical cooperation; a more detailed classification of expenditure by subject area should be provided; a breakdown of training by subject area should be included; and more detailed information on technical cooperation projects in Africa should be provided. Sources of funding of technical cooperation should be uniformly reported.

175. The Commission was pleased to learn that an updated edition of the Directory of Technical Cooperation in Statistics (ST/ESA/STAT/105/Rev.2) had been issued. It noted that the Directory included information on technical cooperation in statistics available from multilateral and bilateral agencies. Further, it was an instrument by which developing countries could gain access to international assistance and by which donor countries and agencies could coordinate their programmes. The Commission recommended that revised updated

editions of the Directory be published and methods explored for disseminating the information more quickly.

176. Several representatives provided information on their countries' bilateral programmes of technical cooperation in statistics. Representatives of regional commissions and international organizations also provided additional information. In particular, the Commission was pleased to note the adoption in 1990 of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s and the action being taken to formulate an overall strategy for its implementation. It was stressed that the output of an effective national statistical system was essential for sound development planning and programmes and that technical cooperation in statistics should encompass promotion of the use of statistics by planners.

177. Many members from developing countries expressed their appreciation of the technical cooperation in statistics provided and of the support provided by the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in cooperation with the regional commissions. One member stressed that the mechanism of project implementation should be improved. The time required for project approval should be reduced, as should the time between the purchase of equipment and its delivery.

178. The Commission noted that during the period under review, technical cooperation projects covered a wide variety of statistical subjects and expressed satisfaction that the financial support given to the programme by UNFPA, UNDP, the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development and other multilateral and bilateral agencies had increased. The subjects covered were multisector statistics; economic statistics, including national accounts; demographic statistics, including population censuses, census and survey cartography, sampling and surveys, household surveys and statistics on women and on special population groups; and data processing and informatics. The Commission recognized that the sharp increase in resources provided for technical cooperation in demographic statistics during 1989 and 1990 could be attributed to the peak in support for national population and housing census activities associated with the 1990 World Programme. Nevertheless, the Commission reiterated the concern expressed at its twenty-fifth session that the "share of resources available for economic statistics was diminishing" (E/1989/21, para. 167) and urged donors that had economic statistics within their mandates to increase the level of their support for such technical cooperation.

179. Statistical training had remained a highly important aspect of the technical cooperation programme in statistics and the Commission expressed satisfaction that the overall funding for training had increased. The Commission noted, however, that expenditures on training included only fellowships, study tours, workshops and seminars and excluded expenditures classified under personnel related to such training activities as national-level training courses and on-the-job training. Due to the importance of that field, the Commission urged the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to increase support for that component of the programme.

180. The Commission stressed the importance of coordination among organizations providing technical cooperation in statistics and the critical

role of the recipient country in the coordination process. It emphasized the role of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in promoting coordination of technical cooperation projects in statistics. However, in view of the overall importance of coordination, the suggestion was made to set up an independent group that, taking into consideration the mandate of the different organizations concerned, would assess the various activities under way to see whether or not there was duplication in technical cooperation.

181. The Commission noted that General Assembly resolution 44/211 and decision 90/26 of the Governing Council of UNDP provided the overall framework for United Nations technical cooperation activities in all fields and for a new agency support cost system. The Commission understood that the aim of the new system, which would become effective in January 1992, was to enhance the technical capabilities of institutions in developing countries through national execution of programmes at the country level, requiring the United Nations system to adjust to the cooperative programmes. The Commission strongly recommended that the implementation of the decisions on new agency support cost arrangements not adversely affect the implementation of the technical cooperation programme in statistics. Since consultations on those arrangements were currently in progress and their impact was unclear, the Commission was of the view that a report should be prepared for its twenty-seventh session on the new arrangements and their impact on technical cooperation in statistics.

Action taken by the Commission

182. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the great importance of technical cooperation programmes with developing countries and endorsed the current technical cooperation activities in statistics carried out by the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development with the substantive technical support of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat;

(b) Emphasized the importance of the training component in the implementation of country projects and urged that resources allocated to that component be increased;

(c) Stressed the importance of coordination in multilateral and bilateral technical cooperation in statistical activities and urged the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to continue to promote such coordination in collaboration with other international organizations;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its twenty-seventh session, a report on technical cooperation in statistics, including information on the impact of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the new agency support cost arrangements on the provision of technical cooperation in statistics.

B. National Household Survey Capability Programme

183. The Commission considered item 11 (b) of its agenda at its 445th meeting, on 8 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress in implementation and coordination of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.3/1991/26).

184. The Commission noted with appreciation that the report was informative and of high quality.

185. The Commission expressed appreciation for the accomplishments of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP), recognizing its dynamism, its effectiveness in promoting household surveys in developing countries, its role in mobilizing technical and other support for country survey programmes, the importance of household surveys as a tool in the collection of a wide range of basic economic, social and demographic statistics and the benefits realized by countries that had participated in the Programme.

186. The Commission was of the view that the technical studies produced and the training workshops carried out under NHSCP were relevant and of high quality and standard. It noted that further technical research studies on methodology were a continuing need in the field of household surveys and urged that NHSCP continue that important activity and make its reports widely available. In that regard, the Commission noted the progress made in the preparation of the manual on collecting literacy data through household surveys. The Commission was aware that several countries, while not formally participating in NHSCP, had been using NHSCP technical studies and methodological guidelines. In a few cases, countries had even established integrated and coordinated household survey programmes as promoted by NHSCP, using their own resources.

187. The Commission was also of the view that the regional commissions had made significant contributions to NHSCP, citing the importance of regional advisers and regional workshops and training efforts. Further, the Commission expressed its appreciation for the ongoing provision of advisory services by ILO in the ECA region and welcomed the continuation of its advisory services in the ESCAP region, where the ILO adviser devoted 80 per cent of his time to NHSCP activities. In contrast, the Commission expressed its concern at the situation in the ECLAC region, where there was currently no regional adviser owing to a shortage of funds. It was agreed that there was a strong need for the continuation of the NHSCP training programme in New Delhi. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the contribution that ESCAP and the NHSCP technical advisers had made to training at the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) and encouraged them to continue.

188. The Commission noted with appreciation that NHSCP continued to accommodate the sectoral concerns of the specialized agencies, such as ILO, FAO, WHO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in national household survey programmes organized with its technical support. The Commission urged the continuation of the collaborative efforts of NHSCP with other specialized agencies, especially in the development of technical studies and national capabilities through training workshops.

189. The Commission stressed the importance of the evaluations of country programmes that had been conducted for NHSCP and urged that such evaluations be undertaken for many other countries.

190. Some Members were of the view that NHSCP had shown itself to be a model of technical cooperation arrangements and that consideration should be given to establishing a programme for the collection of establishment-based statistics using NHSCP as a prototype.

191. The Commission expressed its strong support for the continuation of NHSCP after the end of 1991. It noted in particular that (a) many countries which had recently joined NHSCP would require technical cooperation support and other inputs over the next several years, (b) another 23 countries which had already prepared project proposals were in various stages of entry into NHSCP and would require support, (c) many other countries in the developing regions had expressed interest in joining NHSCP and (d) a number of countries had recently conducted population censuses or were in the process of doing so, and that essential resource should be exploited in the context of NHSCP for the development of household sampling frames. In view of the continuing needs and the proved effectiveness of the Programme, the Commission stressed the importance of continuing the Programme, including its global and regional components.

192. Accordingly, the Commission welcomed the ongoing discussions with UNICEF for continuation of support after 1991 and the intention of UNFPA to continue its support for NHSCP beyond 1991, at both the country and the global level. It also took note of the UNFPA plan to develop a socio-cultural and demographic survey programme in Africa, which would be implemented under the umbrella of NHSCP with arrangements for technical cooperation similar to those for the Pan Arab Project for Child Development (PAPCHILD), and the proposed support of UNFPA for an interregional programme for research after 1991. The Commission welcomed the indication of support from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for household survey programmes in countries participating in NHSCP, particularly in the context of their training needs.

193. The Commission noted that UNDP had provided support for the global component of NHSCP in recent years, on the understanding that the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development of the United Nations Secretariat would assume responsibility for the Central Coordinating Unit of NHSCP as of 1992. However, as noted in paragraph 181 above, new developments had occurred in response to General Assembly resolution 44/211 and decision 90/26 of the Governing Council of UNDP, which might substantially reduce the resources available to the Department to support that and other activities. The Commission was informed that the Department was currently holding discussions with UNDP and UNFPA on the new agency support cost arrangements, but the final outcome of those discussions was not at all certain.

194. Despite those uncertainties, the Commission attached the highest priority to finding ways of continuing essential support for NHSCP. All possible avenues of support should be utilized, including resources made available under the new agency support cost arrangements, the regular budget of the United Nations and any other arrangements that could be developed.

Action taken by the Commission

195. The Commission:

(a) Commended NHSCP as a dynamic and effective programme of technical cooperation for providing assistance and support for developing countries;

(b) Urged multilateral and bilateral organizations to continue to support country projects and programmes designed to strengthen national survey-taking capabilities and carried out under the umbrella of NHSCP;

(c) Strongly recommended the extension of NHSCP beyond 1991 and urged that all possible avenues of support for its activities at the global and regional levels be utilized, including resources made available under the new agency support cost arrangements, the regular budget of the United Nations and any other arrangements that could be developed;

(d) Recognized with appreciation the supportive role played by the regional commissions and urged the strengthening of the regional advisory services in household surveys;

(e) In the context of household surveys, supported the need for continuous development of technical studies, training and interregional workshops and general technical assistance on methods and techniques.

C. World Bank household survey initiatives

196. The Commission considered item 11 (c) of its agenda at its 446th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the World Bank on World Bank initiatives in the design of permanent integrated household surveys (E/CN.3/1991/27).

197. Some members expressed concern that the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) programme might promote the setting up of new or alternative statistical structures and overwhelm other statistical work in statistical offices in Africa. The Commission, however, was informed by the World Bank that that was not intended and that one of the initial activities of an SDA country project preparation mission was to review existing data sources so as to identify priorities with national institutions, determine where data gaps existed and how the SDA project could best fill those gaps. The Commission was further informed by the World Bank that that was intended to ensure that full use was made of existing statistical sources before any new data collection programme was proposed. It was further pointed out that the design of a programme for a country in all circumstances involved nationals, including major data users.

198. The Commission noted that an important activity of the regional SDA programme had been the development of various prototype survey instruments that were made available to participating countries to measure the incidence and distribution of poor and vulnerable groups. At that point, one of those instruments, the Priority Survey, was being implemented in eight countries as a means of providing timely and inexpensive information on current social trends. Three African countries had carried out surveys under SNA, so far.

199. Several members of the Commission welcomed the emphasis placed by the SDA programme on the need for flexibility in the design of national SDA projects and on the clearly stated objective of ensuring that the SDA surveys would be implemented within the framework of national statistical activities and be closely coordinated with other ongoing survey activities.

200. The Commission welcomed the objective of the SDA programme to strengthen national institutions in data collection, monitoring and dissemination, data analysis, training of nationals and establishment of viable and sustainable survey programmes.

201. Reference was made to an interim evaluation report of the SDA programme, but the Commission was of the view that it would be difficult to comment on a document that had not yet been presented for discussion by the SDA Steering Committee or submitted to the Commission. It was also noted that the evaluation report was yet to be discussed by the Governing Council of UNDP, which had requested that the evaluation be done.

202. The Commission also noted the presentation of the LSMS programme. It was explained that the LSMS approach to survey-taking had moved beyond the experimental phase and was generally considered to be an integral part of conventional survey systems.

203. The Commission noted that LSMS, which had first been piloted in Africa, was currently operating in a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East and that there was also interest in the programme in Eastern Europe. Several members in whose countries LSMS had been operating expressed satisfaction with the programme. Policy relevance and flexibility were stressed by two members, whose countries had recently launched LSMS surveys. They further stressed that the survey would yield data covering a large number of important topics.

204. The Commission noted with interest that LSMS, which has been on the "cutting-edge" of developing PC-driven survey technology, considered that other programmes and statistical initiatives were equally involved in that area and that it sought close collaboration with them.

Action taken by the Commission

205. The Commission:

(a) Noted with appreciation the contribution of LSMS in the areas of methodological design, survey development and analysis and recognized its work in the area of PC-based survey design;

(b) Noted the focus of SDA on developing national information systems that fed relevant information directly into the policy-making process and welcomed the involvement of users in determining survey priorities;

(c) Noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in coordination between LSMS and NHSCP; also noted the progress made in coordinating SDA activities with other statistical programmes, in particular NHSCP; while recognizing the progress made, noted the complexity of some of the issues and

strongly urged that efforts to improve coordination be intensified; cautioned against complacency in the area of coordination and emphasized the need for the eradication of competition; stressed the importance of regular, joint or simultaneous missions, exchange of information and further efforts to coordinate programmes at the country level as a means of enhancing cooperation;

(d) Welcomed the increased flexibility and responsiveness to national priorities in the design of national SDA projects;

(e) Deferred giving endorsement to SDA inasmuch as sufficient evidence had not yet been received by the Commission;

(f) Requested the World Bank to prepare a progress report for submission to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session.

D. Coordination issues related to the National Household Survey Capability Programme, the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project and the Living Standards Measurement Study

206. The Commission considered item 11 (d) of its agenda at its 446th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the development of a coordinated United Nations system database for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest and the development of related national databases (E/CN.3/1991/20, paras. 44-46), the report of the Secretary-General on progress in implementation and coordination of the National Household Survey Capability Programme (E/CN.3/1991/26, paras. 12-28 and 54-56) and the report of the World Bank on World Bank initiatives in the design of permanent integrated household surveys (E/CN.3/1991/27).

207. During the discussion, the Commission expressed great concern about coordination of survey programmes and about social statistics and indicators. The Commission stressed the importance of effective coordination, collaboration and integration among the many survey programmes that competed for scarce resources within a country; it recognized, at the same time, that different surveys originated from different sources and had different objectives. The Commission stressed the need for improved coordination at the country level, among international organizations and between countries and international organizations, with a view to delivering support to countries efficiently and with clarity and to making the best use of scarce resources at the national and international levels to meet national needs. Coordination was needed at all stages of survey work, including setting goals, providing technical advice on measurement and conduct of surveys, selecting indicators and determining methods of compiling them, implementing surveys and organizing funding, with the particular aim of avoiding duplication in data collection.

208. Concern was also expressed about the possibility of countries being presented with statistical systems that could not be sustained beyond the life of the programme. The representative of the World Bank explained that programmes such as SDA and NHSCP had different objectives and it would be wrong to view the two as being in competition.

209. The Commission recognized the significant efforts that had been made to improve coordination and the success achieved, as set out in the reports and supplemented orally by the organizations involved and members of the Commission. Successful collaboration had been carried out, for example, in Pakistan between NHSCP and LSMS of the World Bank, and also in Ghana between NHSCP and the Bank's SDA project, because priorities were determined by the Governments concerned. The Commission, nevertheless, was of the view that such instances of coordination were an exception; on the whole, arrangements for coordination were inadequate and efforts at coordination needed to be reinforced significantly.

210. The Commission recognized that the main internationally sponsored survey programmes were relatively new, dynamic and covered fields of interest of several international organizations. Coordination of the survey programmes at the global level was being addressed within specific forums established for NHSCP, LSMS and SDA and the programme for monitoring the achievement of social goals, as indicated in the reports. They had also been addressed in the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the overall mechanism for coordination among the international statistical organizations. Overall arrangements for coordination had been developed but problems still arose and were dealt with individually. The Commission noted the positive experiences with coordination involving joint work or well-coordinated parallel work between NHSCP and LSMS during the past two years, as reported by several countries, regional commissions and other organizations. The situation with SDA was more complex and, although mechanisms existed for coordination, and joint missions had been undertaken with some success, there remained considerable scope for improvement.

211. The Commission recalled the suggestion made by the Chairman during the discussion of technical cooperation in statistics (item 11 (a)) to establish a group for review of coordination of technical cooperation in statistics and its applicability to survey programmes. Several members stressed the important role the regional commissions played in relation to both the operational and the coordination aspects of survey programmes and noted that the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 199Os specifically recognized the need to improve coordination of all statistical development programmes at the national and international levels. Improvements in coordination in relation to LSMS in the ECLAC region were welcomed.

212. Many members of the Commission were of the view that for coordination to be effective it had to take place at the country level; the experience of several countries had confirmed that view. The aims of effective coordination were to avoid duplication and undue pressure on national capability to achieve a well-balanced and stable statistical programme. The fact that donors sometimes needed data for their own operational purposes had to be taken into account and reconciled with country needs. The point was made that arrangements had been established at the institutional level and that they had to be supplemented with concrete action at the country level. Successful cooperation depended on openness, goodwill and the elimination of competition, with efforts aimed at a common purpose, namely the advancement of statistical capability at the national level. Both the World Bank and the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat expressed their readiness to renew their efforts in a positive spirit of cooperation.

213. One specific way to promote coordination at the country level and assist countries in decisions relating to survey programmes was to provide to Governments a list of the various survey programmes and their major features, including advantages and disadvantages. Countries would then be able to make decisions and choices based on their particular needs and problems and establish the coordination steps required.

Action taken by the Commission

214. The Commission:

(a) Noted with deep concern that a number of problems in coordination among various technical cooperation initiatives in the field of household surveys remained;

(b) Welcomed the action already taken to improve coordination of survey programmes at the national and international levels;

(c) Noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in coordination with LSMS and NHSCP;

(d) Noted the progress made in coordinating SDA activities with other statistical programmes, particularly NHSCP, noted the complexity of some of the issues and emphasized that there was scope for further improvement;

(e) Stressed that additional concrete steps should be taken by the organizations involved to improve coordination of survey programmes and, in particular, stressed the importance of regular joint and simultaneous missions, exchange of information and further efforts to coordinate programmes at the country level as the means of enhancing cooperation.

CHAPTER XI

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

215. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at its 447th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its thirteenth session (E/CN.3/1991/2, sects. VI-IX), the report of the Secretary-General on the statistical work of international organizations (E/CN.3/1991/28), the report of the Secretary-General on the plans of international organizations in the area of statistics (E/CN.3/1991/29), and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30).

216. The Commission noted the statement made by the observer for Switzerland, in his capacity as Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians, on strengthening international statistical cooperation, with particular reference to the ECE region. A number of representatives spoke on the matter and the Commission, while recognizing that the issue would be discussed in various forums in Europe, decided, because of the lack of time for further discussion, to refer the matter to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination and to consider it again at its twenty-seventh session.

217. The Commission noted the ongoing work on promoting coordination of statistical data collection activities, both regular collection by the statistical divisions of international organizations and ad hoc requests addressed to Member States for statistical information from non-statistical units of the United Nations and other organizations. It also noted that the Working Group had concluded that considerable progress had been made among the international organizations on those issues over the past two years but had also requested specific additional steps to be taken in support of coordination of those activities.

218. The Commission recalled that it had noted under the agenda items on service statistics, environment statistics and revision of SNA, the initiatives being taken by international organizations to accelerate statistical development while ensuring coordination in selected fields of statistics. The Commission requested the Working Group to review at its fourteenth session experience with those initiatives on the basis of the results that would have accumulated by that time and to report back to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session. The point was made that one of the initiatives, namely, the use of outputs of regional commissions as a basis for global work, was particularly useful as a means of transferring information. The outputs developed in one region could also be useful in another region. In that connection, it was noted that outputs of the UNDP-supported Statistical Computing Project, implemented under the aegis of ECE, were being transferred to developing countries.

Action taken by the Commission

219. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider the question of strengthening international statistical cooperation, as outlined in the statement made by the observer for Switzerland in his capacity as Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians;

(b) Requested the Working Group to review experience with new initiatives taken by the international organizations to accelerate statistical development while ensuring coordination in selected fields of statistics.

220. After reviewing the proposal made by the Working Group concerning possible changes in the composition of the Group (see E/CN.3/1991/2, para. 89), the Commission decided that the Working Group would consist of the officers of the Commission, namely, the Chairman, the three Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur; the representatives to the Commission of the two major contributors to the budget of the United Nations, unless they were already represented in the Bureau; and representatives to the Commission from other Member States selected so as to ensure representation of both developed and developing countries and countries with different economic and statistical systems, bearing in mind that special attention should be given to ensuring representation of developing countries from among the members of each of the following regional commissions: ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

221. The Commission decided that the Working Group, at its fourteenth session, should comprise:

(a) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-sixth session:

Chairman: W. Begeer (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Eduardo Augusto Guimaraes (Brazil)
Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan)
Ivan Sujan (Czechoslovakia)

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya)

(b) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana)
Lelia Boeri de Cervetto (Argentina)
Hermann Habermann (United States of America)
Majid Jamshidi (Iran, Islamic Republic of)
Vadim Kirichenko (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

(c) Alternates selected from representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

Naima Ghemires (Morocco), alternate to Emmanuel Oti Boateng (Ghana)
Miguel Cervera (Mexico), alternate to Lelia Boeri de Cervetto (Argentina)
Imtiaz A. Khan (Pakistan), alternate to Majid Jamshidi (Iran, Islamic Republic of)
María Teresa Sinisterra de De León (Panama), alternate to Eduardo Augusto Guimares (Brazil).

222. The Commission recalled the recommendation of the Working Group concerning the duration of its fourteenth session (E/CN.3/1991/2, para. 91) but decided to follow the normal practice of holding a four-day session because of the large number of tasks assigned to it and the increase in its membership. Consequently, the Commission recommended that the fourteenth session of the Working Group be held at Geneva from 17 to 20 September 1991.

CHAPTER XII

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

A. Programme performance and implementation

223. The Commission considered item 13 (a) of its agenda at its 447th meeting, on 11 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations for the biennium 1988-1989 (E/CN.3/1991/28) and the report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat (E/CN.3/1991/30). The report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part 1)) and the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1988-1989 (A/45/218 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) were made available to the Commission.

224. The representative of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) made a statement supplementing the information on the statistical activities of WTO given in document E/CN.3/1991/28. The Commission was pleased to learn that an International Conference on Travel and Tourism Statistics, organized jointly by WTO and the Government of Canada, would take place in Ottawa from 25 to 28 June 1991. The purpose of the Conference would be to examine several issues of statistics on tourism, including, inter alia, definitions and classifications applicable to tourism statistics, the scope of the tourism industry, measurement of the performance of tourism-related activities and future information needs, with special attention to the needs of developing countries. WTO expected to strengthen its coordination with the regional commissions in its future work on tourism statistics. The Commission welcomed the proposal by WTO that it submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, in 1993, on the conclusions and recommendations of the Ottawa Conference, after consultation and coordination with the regional commissions.

225. The representative of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations also made a statement supplementing the information contained in document E/CN.3/1991/28. The Commission was informed that the Centre had developed several corporate databases, including one on service transnational corporations and a detailed database on foreign direct investment statistics. That work was undertaken in cooperation with the regional commissions and other international organizations, where appropriate.

Action taken by the Commission

226. The Commission:

(a) Expressed satisfaction with the information given to the Commission on progress made by international organizations in implementing their work programmes;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session a progress report on the statistical work of the international organizations;

(c) Requested the World Tourism Organization to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session on the conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference on Travel and Tourism Statistics (Ottawa, 25-28 June 1991), after consultation and coordination with the regional commissions.

B. Programme objectives and planning

227. The Commission considered item 13 (b) of its agenda at its 447th and 448th meetings, on 11 and 12 February 1991. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics (E/CN.3/1991/29), the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1992-1993 and the new medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (E/CN.3/1991/31) and a note by the Secretary-General containing the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Office for 1992-1993 and related information (E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1). The programme on statistics of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/45/6 (Prog. 24)) was made available to the Commission.

Proposed programme of work of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1992-1993 and related information

228. The Commission was of the opinion that its review of the programme of work of the Statistical Office as set out in document E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1 was hampered by a number of constraints and limitations it faced in the review process. It noted that many of those constraints and limitations had been identified at previous sessions. Others arose out of the new procedures and instructions introduced in connection with the preparation of the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1992-1993. The problems raised included (a) the limited time in which to consider the proposed programme of work; (b) the strict separation in the procedures between the review of the programme of work and budgetary considerations; (c) limited information on the allocation of real resources; (d) the artificiality of designating low-priority outputs or activities only from those subprogrammes not designated as high priority in the medium-term plan, since in the Commission's view, each subprogramme, regardless of its overall priority, might contain individual outputs or activities that it might wish to designate as high or low priority; (e) the format and terminology of the budget documentation reflected administrative requirements for the Secretariat, but were not readily comprehensible to outsiders; (f) the terms of reference of the Commission in respect of the programme of work were not clear; (g) the difficulty of assimilating in a short time a large number of changes in the proposed programme of work introduced orally by the Secretariat on the basis of the Commission's deliberations, although the Commission recognized the necessity of modifying the proposed programme to reflect the substantive discussions at the current session.

229. In spite of those concerns, the Commission agreed that the proposed programme of work, as modified by the Secretariat, was in line with the Commission's discussions, reflected broadly the priorities and objectives set by the Commission and constituted an appropriate basis for organizing the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat in the biennium 1992-1993. The Commission felt that it could not consider each output or activity in detail but noted that it had in fact considered most of them in the course of its current deliberations and that its conclusions had been fully taken into account by the Secretariat in orally revising the programme of work. Furthermore, it noted that in spite of its reservations concerning the information and time available and complexity of the process, high and low priority outputs and activities had been identified in the programme as requested. Accordingly, the Commission endorsed the proposed programme of work as amended. Whether or not the resource requirements of the programme might exceed the zero-growth budget guidelines established for the Organization as a whole, and whether or not any additional resources required for the programme could be reallocated from other parts of the Organization, were questions that the Commission felt not competent to consider.

230. The representative of a developed country expressed reservations on that point. It was his delegation's view that in order to accomplish the programme of work proposed by the Secretary-General, a real growth rate appeared to be required. It was the general policy of the Government of his country that no programme of work could be approved if there was a concomitant increase in real resources; the Commission should therefore re-examine the programme of work and eliminate those items of lower priority to achieve a real zero growth rate. Failing that, his delegation could not concur with the proposed programme of work. Other delegations pointed out, however, that an increase in the resources allocated for statistical programmes would be welcome in the context of a redeployment of United Nations budgetary resources.

231. Strong reservations were expressed about the wisdom of designating low priorities in the manner presented by the Secretariat. It was felt that the new procedure was difficult to understand from the point of view of rational planning.

232. The Commission expressed concern at the apparent decline of resources allocated to subprogramme 5 dealing with substantive support for technical cooperation in statistics carried out on behalf of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development. It noted that activities under subprogramme 5 were largely carried out on the basis of extrabudgetary provisions and that the information on resources contained in document E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1 was limited to regular budget resources. Moreover, owing to the uncertainties arising from new agency support cost arrangements scheduled to go into operation at the start of 1992, as discussed under agenda item 11 (a) (see chap. X), the Commission was informed that it was not possible to project the level of extrabudgetary resources available in the next biennium.

233. The Commission expressed general concern at the late distribution of the documents for the session. In the light of the fact that members must consult with other colleagues both within their own substantive areas and related offices so as to be able to accurately reflect national concerns, there was a strong request that every effort be made to provide documentation for future sessions of the Commission well in advance. The Commission noted that in the

modifications to the programme of work a reduction of reports to the Commission was recommended and that the reduction in documentation for the forthcoming session should promote timeliness.

234. The Commission particularly reaffirmed the highest priority for the completion of SNA. It was also felt that attention should be given to addressing the needs of countries in the process of moving from centrally planned economies to market economies. The Commission noted with approval that the Handbook on National Accounting: Application of the SNA in Transition Countries, which was accorded high priority, was a direct response to that need. It also was in full agreement with placing the highest priority on the SNA Handbook on Inflation Accounting and various activities related to the transition from ISIC, Rev.2, to ISIC, Rev.3.

235. There was broad support for the further development of environment statistics, particularly reformulated to reflect the specific outputs and objectives as modified by the discussions and conclusions of previous sessions. The Commission endorsed the further development of the programme in the area of environmental accounting, development of world-level classifications based on the work of the Conference of European Statisticians and other core activities as agreed on by the Commission under agenda item 9 (e) (see chap. VIII).

236. The Commission generally supported the reduced percentage of resources for compilation and dissemination activities, but agreed that that should result from efficiency gains, not reductions in outputs. The Commission was concerned that the quality and timeliness of the recurrent publications might be jeopardized since subprogrammes 2 and 3 were not accorded high priority. Several agencies noted the great importance of timely, comprehensive and reliable statistics in recurrent publications prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. They also supported the view that recurrent statistical publications should be reviewed with a view to improving relevance, timeliness and reliability. The Commission noted that the proposed programme of work made provision for an expert group meeting to be convened to study and revise the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and the Statistical Yearbook, with a view to improving timeliness, efficiency and relevance to a wide range of users.

237. The Commission noted that specific outputs/activities in subprogrammes 2 and 3 were directed towards the improvement of the trade statistics database (COMTRADE) so that users of external trade statistics would receive better and more timely data. It was noted that the number of countries in the COMTRADE database had been increased and attention was being given to improving the quality of the data.

238. A suggestion was made that work on the International Comparison Programme (ICP) should be accorded high priority. In that connection, the Commission noted that the modified work programme had made provision for the preparation and publication of an informational brochure on ICP and for the substantive and technical servicing of the Intersecretariat Working Group on the International Comparison Programme.

239. On the question of coordination, concern was expressed that there might be a disproportionate emphasis on demographic and social statistics in

comparison with economic statistics. The question arose whether efforts had been made to coordinate activities of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat with those of the Population Division. The Commission noted that, in fact, there was an efficient division of labour between those two offices, which worked closely together.

Action taken by the Commission

240. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1992-1993 contained in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1), as orally revised, subject to the comments made by the Commission;

(b) Approved the priorities designated in the note by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1), as orally revised, subject to the comments made by the Commission;

(c) Requested the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat to provide to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session information on the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1994-1995, and also requested that the format be simplified.

CHAPTER XIII

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

241. The Commission considered item 14 of its agenda at its 448th meeting, on 12 February 1991. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-seventh session (E/CN.3/1991/L.3), which was orally amended in the light of suggestions and decisions made by the Commission at its current session. Other amendments and clarifications were made during the discussion of the draft provisional agenda itself. The Commission requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to review the provisional agenda and related documentation at its fourteenth session and introduce any modifications necessary.

242. Several members proposed that item 9 (Demographic and social statistics) be subdivided so as to deal separately with the population and housing censuses and civil registration and vital statistics. The Commission agreed that both topics should be covered in the report requested, along with other issues to be taken up under item 9. The Working Group would review the outline for that report in accordance with past practice and might wish to consider whether item 9 should be divided into two or more sub-items. It was also suggested that a report on development indicators be submitted under an appropriate item. The Commission decided to refer the proposal to the Working Group for consideration in the light of the outcome of the forthcoming meeting in Morocco, which was being convened as a follow-up to the UNRISD study on qualitative aspects of development considered by the Commission at the present session under agenda item 9 (d) (see chap. VIII).

243. With respect to documentation, the Commission emphasized the need to receive the documentation for its twenty-seventh session in good time. The Commission noted that if meaningful and in-depth discussions were to take place, the documentation must be made available to participants in all languages three months before the scheduled session. The Commission considered that the bulk of the documentation should be available in October. It urged the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations preparing documents to adjust their submission of documents to accord with that schedule and requested that all documents, once submitted, be edited, translated and reproduced in a timely fashion.

244. With respect to item 3 (special topics), the Commission requested the Working Group to choose a topic at its fourteenth session. It considered that the special topic discussions provided an excellent opportunity to introduce flexibility into its agenda so that the Commission could respond to new needs as they emerged. Nevertheless, the Commission noted that the provisional agenda for its twenty-seventh session contained several substantive items that might take considerable time to discuss. Accordingly, the Commission requested the Working Group to select a maximum of one special topic either from among the remaining items on the condensed list of special topics for future discussion contained in document E/CN.3/1991/L.3 or from other important issues raised during the Commission's discussions at its current session. A number of possible topics were mentioned. From the remaining topics on the condensed list, several members recommended selecting

statistical education and training, particularly in developing countries. One member recommended that the topic on the European single market be reformulated and placed in a broader context. Two other topics suggested for special discussion were (1) the statistical implications of the debt burden and structural adjustment and the statistical needs arising from the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and (2) issues arising from the statement made by the observer for Switzerland at the 447th meeting, on 11 February, under agenda item 12 (see chap. XI). The Commission noted that both topics had been referred to the Working Group for further consideration and possible follow-up.

245. Several participants were of the view that the agenda of the Commission was very much the same from session to session and that some fundamental restructuring might be in order. In that connection, one member proposed changing the order of discussion of agenda items for the twenty-seventh and subsequent sessions so that items holding more general interest (e.g., coordination, programme questions and technical cooperation) would be considered before more specific topics. It was recalled that, in the past, when such an order of discussion was followed, the discussion of the topics of a more general nature tended to be diffuse and to reduce the value of the discussion of the specific substantive topics. The Commission considered that the Working Group might discuss that issue further.

246. In connection with its consideration of the provisional agenda for the twenty-seventh session, the Commission addressed a number of issues, both general and specific, including (a) the means for improving coordination of the international work in statistics, (b) the role of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, (c) the terms of reference of the Statistical Commission, (d) the means of improving the reconciliation of international trade statistics and estimates, (e) the role of the Commission with respect to the work programme of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and (f) how the Commission or its Working Group might be able to provide a mechanism that would permit an independent assessment of the NHSCP of the United Nations and the SDA and LSMS programmes of the World Bank.

247. The Commission recalled that at the twenty-fourth session, it had considered its terms of reference at some length and that a summary of the terms of reference was also contained in the section of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 dealing with statistics (A/45/6 (Prog. 24)). However, the Commission requested the Statistical Office to circulate information on the terms of reference to Commission members in advance of each session. The Commission also requested the Statistical Office to circulate copies of the reports of the annual meetings of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities to Commission members. Views were expressed that more work needed to be done on the reconciliation of international trade statistics and estimates and the Commission agreed that its Working Group might consider that matter further in the light of the discussions of the subject at the 1991 meeting of the Subcommittee. With regard to the independent evaluations of the United Nations and the World Bank survey programmes, the suggestion was made that copies of the available evaluations of those programmes should be provided to the Working Group. The Commission requested the Working Group to consider how best to address the issue.

Action taken by the Commission

248. Subject to final review by the Working Group, as outlined above, the Commission approved the provisional agenda and requested documentation for its twenty-seventh session. The Commission recommended that its twenty-seventh session be held at United Nations Headquarters from 22 February to 3 March 1993.

249. At its 450th meeting, on 13 February 1991, the Commission decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the approval of the provisional agenda and documentation for its twenty-seventh session (see chap. I, sect. A, draft decision).

CHAPTER XIV

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

250. At its 450th meeting, on 13 February 1991, the Commission adopted the report on its twenty-sixth session (E/CN.3/1991/L.4 and Add.1-24), as amended during the discussion.

CHAPTER XV

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

251. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-sixth session at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 13 February 1991. The Commission held 15 meetings (436th to 450th).

252. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan).

B. Attendance

253. All States members of the Commission were represented at the session. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for a non-member State and representatives of the Secretariat, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I to the present report.

C. Election of officers

254. At its 436th meeting, on 4 February 1991, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: W. Begeer (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Eduardo Augusto Guimaraes (Brazil)
Hiroyasu Kudo (Japan)
Ivan Sujan (Czechoslovakia)

Rapporteur: Jothan Antony Mwaniki (Kenya)

D. Agenda and organization of work

255. At its 436th meeting, on 4 February 1991, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/1991/1 (see annex II to the present report).

256. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of the work of the session set out in document E/CN.3/1991/L.1.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Argentina: Lelia Boeri de Cervetto

Brazil: Eduardo Augusto Guimaraes, Lenildo Fernandes Sílva,* Demétrio Bueno Carvalho*

Bulgaria: Stanoi Tassev, Lidia Bratanova*

Canada: Ivan P. Fellegi, Gordon J. Brackstone,* Jacob Ryten,* Béla Prigly*

China: Zhang Sai, Long Hua,* Liu Xinggen,* Chen Quangen*

Czechoslovakia: Ivan Sujan, Zdenek Vesely*

France: Jean Claude Milleron, Jean Louis Bodin,* Gaston Banderier*

Germany: Guenter Kopsch, Marianne Bogner*

Ghana: Emmanuel Oti Boateng

Hungary: György Vukovich, Sándorné Pál,* Zoltán Szedlacskó*

Iran (Islamic Republic of): Majid Jamshidi

Japan: Hiroyasu Kudo, Kenichi Hirayama,* Nobuyuki Urata,* Youichi Nakamura,* Kazuo Minagawa,* Akira Takami

Kenya: Jothan Antony Mwaniki

Mexico: Miguel Cervera, Mario Palma Rojo,* Pablo Macedo*

Morocco: Naima Ghemires, Ahmed Amaziane*

Netherlands: W. Begeer, W. F. M. de Vries,* P. R. Post*

Norway: Gisle Skancke, Liv Hobbelstad Simpson*

Pakistan: Imtiaz A. Khan, Tehmina Janjua*

Panama: María Teresa Sinisterra de De León, Noris Ramírez*

Togo: Bouraima Nouridine

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Vadim Kirichenko, Vladimir Shevchenko,* Alexander Pankin*

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* Alternate.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: Jack Hibbert, M. J. Erritt,* T. J. Griffin,* R. M. Allen*

United States of America: Hermann Habermann, Suzann Evinger,* Kenneth Bryson, Carol Carson, C. Louis Kincannon, Mark Plant, Katrina Reut, Charles Waite, Hugh Dugan, John V. Hurley

Zambia: David Shinamwala Diangamo

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Australia, Bolivia, Cuba, Egypt, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, New Zealand, Romania, Turkey

Non-member State represented by an observer

Switzerland

United Nations Secretariat

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Office at Vienna

United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations University

Specialized agencies and GATT

International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

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* Alternate.

Intergovernmental organizations

Commission of the European Communities, Customs Cooperation Council, Economic Community for West African States, Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Pan American Health Organization

Non-governmental organizations

Category I: International Chamber of Commerce

Category II: Disabled Peoples' International, International Institute for Vital Registration and Statistics, International Statistical Institute

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Special issues:

   (a) Increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services;

   (b) Effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services.

4. National accounts and balances:

   (a) System of National Accounts (SNA);

   (b) System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS);

   (c) Links between the System of National Accounts and the System of Balances of the National Economy.

5. International economic classifications.

6. Service statistics.

7. Price statistics.

8. Industrial statistics.

9. Demographic, social and environment statistics:

   (a) Population and housing censuses;

   (b) Civil registration and vital statistics;

   (c) Social statistics and indicators;

   (d) Patterns of consumption: qualitative aspects of development;

   (e) Environment statistics;

   (f) Human settlements statistics.

10. Development and integration of methodological work.

11. Technical cooperation:

   (a) Technical cooperation in statistics;

(b) National Household Survey Capability Programme;

(c) World Bank household survey initiatives;

(d) Coordination issues related to the National Household Survey Capability Programme, the Social Dimensions of Adjustment project and the Living Standards Measurement Study.

12. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

13. Programme questions:

(a) Programme performance and implementation;

(b) Programme objectives and planning.

14. Provisional agenda for the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.

15. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-sixth session.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1991/1 and Corr.1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.3/1991/2	2, 10, 12	Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its thirteenth session
E/CN.3/1991/3	3 (a)	Increasing user awareness of the value of statistical outputs and services: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/4	3 (b)	Effects of structural adjustment programmes and the debt burden on the work programmes of national and international statistical services: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/5	4 (a)	Progress in the revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/6	4 (a)	Report of the Working Party of the Conference of European Statisticians on the System of National Accounts (SNA)
E/CN.3/1991/7	4 (a)	Report of the Economic Commission for Africa Meeting on the System of National Accounts (SNA)
E/CN.3/1991/8	4 (a)	Report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Meetings on the Revision of the System of National Accounts (SNA)
E/CN.3/1991/9	4 (a)	Final Report of the Regional Seminar on National Accounts convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1991/10	4 (a)	Report of the Expert Meeting on the Revision of the System of National Accounts in the Arab World
E/CN.3/1991/11	4 (a), 4 (c)	Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the Reconciliation of SNA/MPS Standards of National Accounting
E/CN.3/1991/12	4 (b)	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) on the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS)
E/CN.3/1991/13	4 (c)	Progress in the harmonization of the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the System of Balances of the National Economy (MPS): report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/14	5	Progress of work on the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE): report of the International Labour Office
E/CN.3/1991/15	6	Work done by national and international agencies in the field of service statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/16	6	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics on a model survey of computer services
E/CN.3/1991/17	7	Developments in phase VI of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) and related issues: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/18	8	World Programme of Industrial Statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/19	9 (b)	Progress on civil registration and vital statistics: report of the Secretary-General

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1991/20	3 (b), 9 (c), 11 (d)	Progress made in the development of a coordinated United Nations system database for selected social statistics and indicators of common interest and the development of related national databases: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/21	9 (d)	Case-studies carried out by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and preparations for the planned international statistical meeting on indicators of patterns of consumption: report of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
E/CN.3/1991/22	9 (e)	Methods of environment statistics developed under the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/23	4 (a), 9 (e)	Progress made in the development of environmental statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/24	9 (a), 9 (c), 9 (f), 10	General development and integration of methodological work, including experience and progress made in international classifications: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/25	11 (a)	Technical cooperation in statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/26	11 (b), 11 (d)	Progress in implementation and coordination of the National Household Survey Capability Programme: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/27	11 (c), 11 (d)	World Bank initiatives in the design of permanent integrated household surveys: report of the World Bank

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1991/28	12, 13 (a)	Overall review of the statistical work of the international organizations: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/29	12, 13 (b)	Plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/30	3 (a), 4 (a), 7, 8, 9 (a), 9 (b), 9 (c), 9 (e), 10, 11 (a), 12, 13 (a)	Updated information on the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/31	13 (b)	Proposed work programme of the Statistical Office for the biennium 1992-1993 and the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997: report of the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/CRP.1	13 (b)	Proposed programme of work of the Statistical Office for 1992-1993 and related information
E/CN.3/1991/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the session: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/L.2	2	State of preparation of documentation for the session: note by the Secretary-General
E/CN.3/1991/L.3	14	Draft provisional agenda for the twenty-seventh session of the Commission: note by the Secretariat
E/CN.3/1991/L.4 and Add.1-24	15	Draft report of the Commission
PROVISIONAL ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/2/Rev.4	4 (a)	Revised System of National Accounts (SNA): draft chapters and annexes

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Litho in United Nations, New York ISSN 0251-9976 11442—April 1991—3,325